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ABSTRACT

This program book contains progress reports for the colleges that participated in the American Association of Community Colleges' (AACC) Exploring America's Communities (EAC) project, which works to strengthen the teaching of American history, literature, and culture at the community college level. Parts 1, 2, and 3 describe the National Conference on American Pluralism and Identity, including the conference's agenda and roster of participants. Part 4 provides progress reports from the following colleges: Alpena Community College (Michigan), Anoka Ramsey Community College (Minnesota), Atlanta Metropolitan College (Georgia), Bergen Community College (New Jersey), Black River Technological (Arkansas), Bronx Community College (New York), Butler County Community College (Pennsylvania), Carroll Community College (Maryland), Central Florida Community College (Florida), Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College (South Carolina), Collin County Community College (Texas), Cumberland County College (New Jersey), Danville Area Community College (Illinois), Fresno City College (California), Hagerstown Junior College (Maryland), Harold Washington College (Illinois), Harrisburg Area Community College (Pennsylvania), Hudson County Community College (New Jersey), Indian Hills Community College (Iowa), Iowa Central Community College (Iowa), Itawamaba Community College (Mississippi), Kirkwood Community College (Iowa), Lakeland Community College (Ohio), Lee College (Texas), Leeward Community College (Hawaii), Metropolitan Community Colleges (Missouri), Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (Mississippi), Monroe Community College (New York), Motlow State Community Colleges (Tennessee), Northhampton Community College (Pennsylvania), Nunez Community College (Louisiana), Rancho Santiago College (California), Rockland Community College (New York), San Antonio College (Texas), Santa Rosa Junior College (California), Southeast Community College (Kentucky), Tarrant County Junior College (Texas), Tulsa Community College (Oklahoma), Tyler Junior College (Texas), Valencia Community College (Florida), and West Los Angeles College (California). (HAA)

ED 403 924

AACC

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AMERICAN PLURALISM AND IDENTITY

Program Book

January 18-19, 1997
Hotel Monteleone
New Orleans, Louisiana

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Exploring America's Communities,
a project of the American Association of Community Colleges,
funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities,
and conducted in cooperation with the Community College Humanities Association
and Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society

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EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES: IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AMERICAN PLURALISM AND IDENTITY

Program Book

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Project 1

Agenda 2

Roster of Participants 6

Progress Reports from
Participating Colleges 17

EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES: IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

About the Project

The National Conference on American Pluralism and Identity is the culmination of AACC's *Exploring America's Communities* project, which works to strengthen the teaching and learning of American history, literature, and culture at the nation's community colleges.

Exploring America's Communities is part of the National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity initiated by the National Endowment for the Humanities. For the past two years, this multi-component project has provided the forty-one participating colleges with a set of activities to assist faculty members integrate ideas, readings, and discussion about American pluralism and identity into their curricula. These activities included:

- *Exploring America's Communities Teleconference*, telecast to five hundred communities across the country
- *Regional Conferences on American Pluralism and Identity* at which college teams worked with assigned mentors to develop action plans for their campus projects
- *Mentoring Services* throughout the project period to help the college teams refine and implement their projects
- *Resources*, such as the *In Quest of Common Ground* newsletter, the NEH Conversation Kit, and an array of bibliographies, course syllabi, and related content materials

At this National Conference on American Pluralism and Identity, the forty-one colleges will share their progress through panel presentations, displays of materials, and informal networking. They will also share responses to four key questions garnered from their student and faculty conversations throughout the project. These questions are:

- What does it mean to be an American?
- What divides us?
- What brings us together?
- What do we have in common?

AACC's *Exploring America's Communities* project is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and conducted in cooperation with the Community College Humanities Association and Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society. Project staff are: Diane U. Eisenberg, project director, James Mahoney, project administrator, and Nadya Labib, project coordinator.

EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES: IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

National Conference on American Pluralism and Identity

January 18-19, 1997
The Monteleone Hotel
New Orleans, Louisiana

AGENDA

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18

8:00 am - 9:00 am	**Registration and Continental Breakfast** - *La Nouvelle West* Display tables for materials will be available
9:00 am - 9:15 am	**Opening Session** - *La Nouvelle West* **Welcome and Opening Remarks** *Diane U. Eisenberg, Project Director* *David A. Berry, Executive Director, Community College Humanities Association, and Professor of History, Essex County College*
9:15 am - 10:45 am	**Creating New Courses on American Pluralism and Identity Topics** - *La Nouvelle West* Panelists: *Larry Aufderheide, Lakeland Community College, OH* *Libby Bay, Rockland Community College, NY* *Richard Curcio, Cumberland Community College, NJ* *Dana Grove, Indian Hills Community College, IA* *Mark Lidman, Metropolitan Community Colleges, MO* *Jeannette Palmer, Motlow State Community College, TN*
10:45 am - 11:00 am	Break
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	**Small Group Discussions** Beauregard Room - David Berry Cathedral Room - Eleanor Q. Tignor Cabildo Room - Jo Marshall Gallier Room - Beccie Seaman Pontalba Room - Bob Sessions Ursuline Room - Max Reichard/George Vaughan

National Conference on American Pluralism and Identity

AGENDA

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18 *(CONTINUED)*

12:15 pm - 1:30 pm — **Luncheon** - *Queen Anne Ballroom*

NEH Workshop: Grant Opportunities Available to Community Colleges

David Berry, Community College Humanities Association
Robert Sessions, Kirkwood Community College, IA

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm — **Integrating American Pluralism and Identity Topics into Existing Courses** - *La Nouvelle West*

Panelists:

James Ryan, Bronx Community College, NY
Harriett Schwartz, Collin County Community College, TX
Ron Taylor, Santa Rosa Junior College, CA
Ann Weber, Carroll Community College, MD

2:45 pm - 3:45 pm — **Small Group Discussions**

Beauregard Room - David Berry
Cathedral Room - Eleanor Q. Tignor
Cabildo Room - Jo Marshall
Gallier Room - Beccie Seaman
Pontalba Room - Bob Sessions
Ursuline Room - Max Reichard/George Vaughan

4:00 pm - 5:30 pm — **A Sampling of Video Presentations** - *La Nouvelle West*

- ***Talk To Me: Americans in Conversation***
  A documentary film produced for the *National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity*
- Videos produced by participating colleges

Reception - Iberville Room

National Conference on American Pluralism and Identity

AGENDA

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19

8:00 am - 9:00 am	**Continental Breakfast** - *La Nouvelle West*
9:00 am - 10:00 am	**Conducting Faculty Development Activities on American Pluralism and Identity Topics** - *La Nouvelle West* Panelists: *Tony Howell, Tarrant County Junior College, TX* *Cherie Hughes, Tulsa Junior College, OK* *Alan Kaufman, Bergen Community College, NJ* *Doreen Smith, Northampton Community College, PA*
10:00 am - 10:45 am	**Small Group Discussions** Beauregard Room - David Berry Presbytere Room - Eleanor Q. Tignor Cabildo Room - Jo Marshall Gallier Room - Beccie Seaman Pontalba Room - Bob Sessions Ursuline Room - Max Reichard/George Vaughan
10:45 am - 11:00 am	Break
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	**Companion Activities: Engaging the Community in Conversations about American Pluralism and Identity** - *La Nouvelle West* Panelists: *Melissa Bregenzer, Danville Area Community College, IL* *Jani Decena-White, Hudson County Community College, NJ* *Barry Pike, Nunez Community College, LA* *Jan Tyler, Black River Technical College, AR*
12:00 pm - 12:45 pm	**Small Group Discussions** Beauregard Room - David Berry Presbytere Room - Eleanor Q. Tignor Cabildo Room - Jo Marshall Gallier Room - Beccie Seaman Pontalba Room - Bob Sessions Ursuline Room - Max Reichard/George Vaughan

National Conference on American Pluralism and Identity

AGENDA

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19 ***(CONTINUED)***

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	**Luncheon** - *Queen Anne Ballroom*
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	**Closing Session** - *La Nouvelle West*
	Open Discussion: ***What does it mean to be an American? What have we learned?*** Moderators: *Diane U. Eisenberg and David A. Berry*
	Next Steps *Diane U. Eisenberg and George Vaughan, Project Evaluator*

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EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES: IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

Progress Reports From Participating Colleges

- **Alpena Community College**, MI
- **Anoka Ramsey Community College**, MN
- **Atlanta Metropolitan College**, GA
- **Bergen Community College**, NJ
- **Black River Technical College**, AR
- **Bronx Community College**, NY
- **Butler County Community College**, PA
- **Carroll Community College**, MD
- **Central Florida Community College**, FL
- **Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College**, SC
- **Collin County Community College**, TX
- **Cumberland County College**, NJ
- **Danville Area Community College**, IL
- **Fresno City College**, CA
- **Hagerstown Junior College**, MD
- **Harold Washington College**, IL
- **Harrisburg Area Community College**, PA
- **Hudson County Community College**, NJ
- **Indian Hills Community College**, IA
- **Iowa Central Community College**, IA

Progress Reports From Participating Colleges

(CONTINUED)

- **Itawamba Community College**, MS
- **Kirkwood Community College**, IA
- **Lakeland Community College**, OH
- **Lee College**, TX
- **Leeward Community College**, HI
- **Metropolitan Community Colleges**, MO
- **Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College**, MS
- **Monroe Community College**, NY
- **Motlow State Community College**, TN
- **Northampton Community College**, PA
- **Nunez Community College**, LA
- **Rancho Santiago College**, CA
- **Rockland Community College**, NY
- **San Antonio College**, TX
- **Santa Rosa Junior College**, CA
- **Southeast Community College**, KY
- **Tarrant County Junior College**, TX
- **Tulsa Community College**, OK
- **Tyler Junior College**, TX
- **Valencia Community College**, FL
- **West Los Angeles College**, CA

ALPENA

Exploring America's Communities: Progress Report
January 8, 1997

1. Located in the rural, geographically isolated, sparsely populated northeast corner of lower Michigan, Alpena Community College is the only institution of higher learning for 100 miles in any direction. The college serves just under 200 full time equivalent credit students; non-credit courses primarily geared toward business and workforce development, will register about 2,000 adult learners per year. Alpena Community College is the cultural, educational and training center for its five-county service district covering 3,000 square miles, an area roughly equivalent to the size of Rhode Island and Delaware combined. The community the college serves is culturally homogeneous, predominantly white, and is characterized by high unemployment and poverty and low educational attainment.

2. The Alpena Community College Exploring America's Communities team had four primary goals in our action plan: (1) revise a 200 level news writing course to reflect readings related to American pluralism and identity; (2) revise a children's literature course to include readings from a wide range of cultural perspectives and ethnicities, (3) offer three cultural awareness workshops open to faculty, staff and the community; and (4) form an advisory committee comprised of key college and community leaders to sustain the initiative after the grant period expires. A component of the revision of the news writing course was to use the Internet to establish a conversation with student journalists from community colleges with more diversity than Alpena Community College. A component of the revision of the children's literature course was a requirement that students research an ethnic area, prepare a "culture kit" reflecting that area, and then present their findings as an instructional package in local elementary and junior high class rooms.

3, We have accomplished much of what we set out to do, though a considerable distance still needs to be traveled. The News Writing 253 course was revised and the Internet dialogue initiated. The children's literature course was revised, the culture kits were created, and the presentations were delivered in area public school classrooms. Two of the three faculty gatherings have been offered. The advisory committee was formed and still meets regularly. The readings added to the news writing syllabus contributed significantly to student learning in the course "The Organizer's Tale," by Chavez, "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," by Haley, and "Discoveries" by Michael Dorris were very interesting to students and sparked considerable discussion related to minority access to the American Dream, the objectivity of conventional readings of American history, and the current state of cultural understanding in America. The Internet dialogue between peers also revealed insights. Students in the children's literature course profited from having to learn new material in sufficient depth and detail to serve as instructors of others. The connection between Alpena Community College and the participating public school teachers also

contributed to the conversation, as did the involvement of the county librarian, who will store the completed culture kits for display and future use in the library resource room.

4. Our primary obstacle was fitting the project into already hectic schedules. The amorphous parameters of the project made some potential participants hesitant. Some instructors, especially in the math and technical areas, viewed the initiative as beside the point, not their responsibility, a lot of fluff, cultural tinkering of a risky sort, or just too much work for no quantifiable payoff. Others, in the social sciences, saw it as absolutely on the money and immediately pitched in. Getting people's attention was a problem at times. Keeping everyone focused on the big picture was also sometimes complicated. Within an academic environment, issues of turf do emerge and must be dealt with. We have found that there is no quick fix here.

5. We intend to carry the project further this winter by developing a film series open to students, faculty, and the community that will explore in detail the issues we've dealt with these last nine months. We would like to do our third faculty gathering in the spring, focusing on the African American experience. We need to maintain our creativity and focus to keep this initiative alive; that is why we have an advisory committee and they are beginning to carry the project forward.

6. What does it mean to be an American?

Students: "The opportunity to be different."
Colleagues: "Freedom with responsibility."

What divides us?

Students: "The media trying to put labels on everything."
Colleagues: "An inability to define our culture with any accuracy."

What brings us together?

Students: "When we break down barriers and treat one another like human beings."
Colleagues: "Crisis."

What do we have in common?

Students: "Each other."
Colleagues: "More than we might think."

AnokaRamsey Community College
Coon Rapids Campus

EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES
PROGRESS REPORT

Anoka-Ramsey Community College, established in 1965, overlooks a bend in the Mississippi River twenty miles upstream from the heart of Minneapolis, located on the northern edges of the metropolitan area. The college's sense of place is bifurcated: to the north and west are farms and forests; to the south and east, urban areas. Most typically blue-collar and rural in makeup, the counties of Anoka and Ramsey contribute most of the 9,000 students who annually take classes at the college's two campuses. The college's function has traditionally been to provide for transfer and general education, with over 800 students receiving associate of arts degrees annually. Those students have been predominately white and of northern European descent. Recently, however, the college's minority enrollment has grown from 2% (mostly native American) to over 5% (increasing numbers of Asian and African refugees). An area in transition, it is anchored by the city of Anoka, the hometown of Garrison Keillor and considered by most to be the model for the mythical Lake Woebegone.

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an equal opportunity institution and employer

The grant application from the ARCC team specified three areas for action: a series of faculty workshop to result in grass-roots level curriculum transformation through inclusion of concepts of pluralism and identity into day-to-day teaching and activities; the development of an interdisciplinary course as an outgrowth of that curricular change; and a series of Internet conversations for students with an ethnically different student body, a kind of partnership through technology. The overarching goal of the team was to infuse teaching and learning in such a way that study and discussions about American pluralism and identity would become fundamental to the course fabric, not add-ons that could be arbitrarily snipped off. The team hoped to make pluralism as obvious an issue as has become writing across the curriculum and non-sexist language. A secondary goal was to bring the importance of this project to the awareness of all faculty, not just those in literature, history, and the humanities.

The major accomplishments to date can be categorized in two types: communications and events. A questionnaire went out to all faculty, delineating a series of activities and inviting participation. Data were maintained by the team members and used for personal contact with the respondents when events were planned. Team members believed strongly that the success of the project rested on bringing faculty into the project and that this could be best accomplished by one-on-one

persuasion. Blanket invitations are too easy to ignore. Indeed, dissemination of information was so successful and pervasive that the term "Pluralism Project" has become a common part of campus' vocabulary. A presentation to the President' Council, a group of college managers, was given, and they reaffirmed their support. Distribution of the project newsletter "*Pluralism and Common Ground: Community at Anoka-Ramsey*" maintained the presence of the subject for faculty and administrators through five issues. The sixth issue, at press for January, will provide faculty members with resource materials as they plan syllabi for winter quarter: books, journal articles, movies and videos, and listings of area concerts, plays, and art exhibits with pluralistic focuses.

The first successful activity for the Pluralism Project was in the spring, a week-long screening of the AACC video "*Exploring America's Communities Teleconference*" followed by an hour of conversation on subjects of community and identity generated by the video. Over seventy faculty, students, and staff took part in these discussions on such issues as the nature of the college community and its roots, the various identities that members of the community see, and our own attachments to place. An initial workshop was held, before the closing of the spring term, for faculty and team members to decide together ways in which the curriculum could be changed. At the opening convocation for the fall term, the Pluralism Project had an opportunity to present a status report to

the faculty and to solicit participation for the year's activities. Team members asked for a Year of Exploring Community, in which the transformation of the curriculum would begin. In October, a highly successful day of activities with mentor Max Reichard included two faculty workshops and a brown bag lunch with the college community. In November, team members led a second workshop on developing an interdisciplinary course, integrating ideas that had come about as a result of Dr. Reichard's visit to ARCC. During the whole of this period, team members met weekly to strategize for the future and to evaluate past activities. As a result of the Pluralism Project's "institutionalization," the chair of the college Cultural Diversity Committee met with the group and told them that the their group had disbanded because the broad scope of the project had subsumed the need for another committee. Consequently, the team members took on the role of leading Diversity Dialogues with students and staff that had previously been a function of the former diversity committee.

As with many endeavors, much may be accomplished but more remains to be done. ARCC's team members found that they had charted a very ambitious course and that such college issues as an accreditation report and visit, the mandate to convert from quarters to semesters, and the loss of deans of both student services and academic affairs meant less time and fewer participants for "peripheral activities." Many faculty

feel they are so deeply committed to these college-wide problems that they have little time to spare. Nonetheless, the involvement of almost 100 individuals from the campus community in project activities must be seen as significant, and team members view such statistics positively. The project will work to develop the Internet link-up, and the student-to-student conversation will enlarge and continue. Faculty have made substantial progress in curriculum transformation, and as they rewrite courses for conversion from quarters to semesters, there will be a place on the common course outline for them to include information on how the subjects of pluralism and identity will be addressed in their courses. Team members will continue to supply them with the resources and the encouragement to implement these ideas.

One response by students and colleagues to the questions posed in the conversations has been an acknowledgment of the importance of these issues. But perhaps the most gratifying response has been the interest with which participants have approached the topic of community: how to define it, how it shapes us, how much we need it. This response has grown out of a consensus that there are more things that bring us together than divide us, that we have more commonalties than difference. In one conversation, a young white supremacist engaged in dialogue with representatives of that "multiculturalism" he was so contemptuous of, and the result was at least détente, if not agreement.

The very fact of the conversation was in itself a very powerful tribute to the efficacy of the Pluralism Project at Anoka-Ramsey Community College.

ATLANTA METROPOLITAN COLLEGE

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Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground

Progress Report 12/17/96

Atlanta Metropolitan College, an urban, two-year non-residential unit of the University System of Georgia, began classes in September, 1974. Located in the Southwest section of the city, the College seeks to provide..."affordable, accessible and relevant educational programs to a student population diverse in age and in ethnic, racial, social, political and cultural backgrounds."

The College enrolls 1982 students in three types of degree-granting programs, including forty three transfer programs for students pursuing baccalaureate degrees; nine career programs for students seeking academic preparation for employment; and thirteen joint programs with Atlanta Area Technical School to complement vocational/technical certification. Additionally, the College offers eleven certificate programs in specialized occupational fields. Through the Division of Continuing Education, the College also offers one hundred and nine non-credit courses, workshops and seminars, aimed toward personal development and skills enhancement for one thousand four hundred and one individuals within the community.

In an attempt to enhance teaching and learning about American pluralism and identity, the Atlanta Metropolitan College team developed an action plan which proposed to revise and prepare for teaching Humanities 101 and History 232. Secondly, the plan proposed to provide opportunities for the greater college community to seek and find "common ground" as students, faculty and staff explored the notion of what it means to be an American.

The entire College family has addressed the objectives of the grant through a number of activities. Following initial meetings with key administrators of the College, an expanded Plurality and Diversity Task Force was established which included representation from all major campus units. The task force held several discussions relevant to the means for implementing campus-wide multiculturalism and diversity. In addition, faculty teams from the Divisions of Humanities and Fine Arts, and Social Science met and discussed course syllabi revisions, probable textbooks, and pertinent materials to be used in targeted courses.

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In addition to the revision of History 232 and Humanities 101, Humanities 102 was also revised to allow for an indepth look at common ground issues. A faculty-staff forum addressed the theme and worked on basic definitions and terms that are utilized campus-wide. Three day and three evening assemblies were held which featured lecture-forums addressing the theme. Thus, the entire campus community, along with visitors from the broader community, had the opportunity to hear lectures by actress and producer Pamela Poitier, novelist Faye McDonald Smith and attorney Patricia Russell McCloud and follow up with questions, answers and general large group discussions of what it means to be an American; what divides us; what brings us together; and what we have in common.

While each of the three revised courses was scheduled for the Fall, 1996 Quarter, only two of the courses materialized. History 232 was cancelled due to insufficient enrollment. Nevertheless, Humanities 101, which was retitled Exploring Selected American Cultures: African American, Hispanic American and Asian American, and Humanities 102, African American Culture II, were very successful as revised courses. In each of the classes the students and the teacher sat in a circle to expedite the conversation format. Each day the class freewrote about the reading materials for the day. Following the writing, the class employed "read arounds" where everyone read and was heard; then discussion followed. The Humanities 101 class invited an Hispanic and a Korean speaker to address the class, while the Humanities 102 class invited a high school culture class to participate in their thematic exploration of "Role Models-In Search of Heroes". Students identified their personal role models and heroes. Using Nix's "Characteristics of a Hero", they evaluated their choices to determine whether each met the criteria.

Students in Humanities 101 visited a Latin American Club to experience Latin music and the Crosby Museum to view the African American Women's Art Exhibition. Students in Humanities 102 took field trips to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, The Carter Presidential Center and to Gullah Country, an Island near Beaufort, S.C. Both classes had students to visit the African American Heritage Library to view a photographic display featuring scenes from various African American communities across the nation.

"Brown Bag" Lunch conversations were held in the student snack bar where the international students club members and humanities class members informally discussed the need for various American sub-cultures to actively seek common ground. As the quarter progressed, these group chats became larger with students from throughout the campus joining the conversations. In addition, the Division of Humanities and Fine Arts sponsored a Christmas Concert Luncheon on December 3rd. The musical and dramatic renditions highlighted the celebration of Christmas by various cultures. The meal served featured authentic Jamaican cuisine, in honor of the large Caribbean subculture in the city.

Even though it is generally felt by college constituents that the project has gone well, there have been some obstacles. First of all, the two courses identified for revision were non-core electives; thus, substantial enrollments were not automatic.

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Resultantly, History 232, Minorities in American History, did not make this quarter. More vigorous recruiting must occur prior to registration for Spring Quarter when the course will be rescheduled.

Secondly, the greatest perceived obstacle was the lack of funding for the project. The Division's budget is extremely limited. When expenditures are made for long distance conference calls, trips, new materials and incidentals related to project implementation, a hardship is placed on the Division.

Finally, we now recognize that it would have been wiser to have revised courses taught in the Humanities and Fine Arts Division first. By so doing, greater supervision of project activities could have been exercised and greater effort to recruit students for all project classes would have been exerted.

The three revised courses will be rescheduled for the Spring, 1997 Quarter. Additional assemblies, featuring guest lecturers, are being scheduled for the remainder of the academic term.

Moreover, the College will co-sponsor the 1997 HBCU Faculty Development Seminar during which our team leader will chair the diversity committee assuming the responsibility of programming all of the sessions which will address the issue of cultural diversity.

In January, the team will complete its evaluation of the project and have the findings available at the National Conference in New Orleans.

Conversations regarding "American Plurality and Identity" have been spirited, honest, and forthright. Individuals have sought fervently to come to grips with their own identity, their acceptance (or lack of acceptance) of diverse groups within the academic community and the greater community. Many myths about multiculturalism have been examined. Individuals and groups have begun to seriously probe the meaning of Americanism. Students have made a more careful analysis of their own multiple heritages.

Faculty and students have vocalized what they consider as being American. Students expressed such issues as "having equal protection under the law;" "having the freedom to express one's self;" "being able to practice cultural traditions;" "having the opportunity to pursue your personal, social, political, economic and religious goals;" and "having the freedom to pursue the ideal of social equality and material success."

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Exploring American's Communities:
In Quest of Common Ground
pp. 4

Faculty determined that to be an American means that we are a nation of immigrants that has been transformed over time into a diverse people with a common heritage who believe in the principles of liberty and freedom. We are very conscious of the three great waves of immigrants to the United States which resulted in the current composition of America. The first great wave was before the Civil War with Northwestern Europeans; the second great wave was after the Civil War with Southern and Eastern Europeans and the third great wave was after World War II with Hispanics and Asians. As a predominately black college we are very much aware that African Americans were brought to the U.S. as slaves prior to the Civil War. The assimilation of these groups and the unique cultures in each into a system which embraces democracy has from time to time caused division in the process of Americanization. The principles of individual liberty and freedom in a democratic system are what brings the people of America together.The benefits reaped from the principles utilizing this process and their impact upon our daily lives are what the American people have in common. How these principles should be embraced and what all Americans have in common are discussed in detail in U.S. and Georgia Government and Minorities in American History courses taught at Atlanta Metropolitan College.

Students determined that Americans are divided by ancestral heritage, race, religious beliefs, geographic location, age, gender, economic status, educational attainment, sexual preference, and the belief that some human beings are superior to others. Paradoxically, however, Americans are brought together by common goals, shared language, similar interests, cross-cultural communication, like values, national traditions, shared holidays, positive attitudes and even catastrophic occurrences which make us realize that all humans deserve the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Consequently, students feel that Americans share many areas of common ground including the need for personal comfort and dignity, the desire for financial security, the belief in a power superior to ourselves, the desire to experience success, the requirement to abide by the laws of the country, the opportunity to develop to one's full potential, and the right to practice the customs, traits and language of people who share allegiance to the United States.

Finally, faculty and students alike agree that the opportunity for freedom of expression and creative individualism are considered two of the most important elements of "common ground" which Americans possess.

Bergen
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Exploring America's Communities Project: In Search of Common Ground
Progress Report

1. Bergen Community College is a comprehensive, publicly supported two-year college which is fully accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The College opened in September, 1968. Through its open admissions policy, the college is committed to equal educational opportunities for all, regardless of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, or handicap.

Bergen Community College enrolls over 12,000 full- and part-time students of all ages in its degree and certificate programs in more than seventy fields of study, and an additional 10,000 students in its division of continuing education.

The student body reflects the diversity of the county and this diversity is celebrated on campus. In Fall 1996, there were 2,973 foreign-born students representing over 98 countries. Of the 12,296 students enrolled, 68.3 % were White, 16 % Hispanic, 9.7 % Asian, 0.2 % Native American, and 5.8 % African American. The median age of a Bergen student is 23.3. The male population represents 43 % of the total enrollment; women make up 57 % of the student body.

Bergen Community College is located on a beautiful 167-acre suburban campus and is bordered by two golf courses and a county park. The campus is in Paramus, New Jersey, the geographic center of Bergen County. With more than 300,000 households and nearly one-million residents, Bergen is one of the largest counties in the state. The college is approximately 20 minutes to the north of New York City, which affords students access to a wide variety of cultural events and activities.

2. The primary goals of the Action Plan to enhance teaching and learning about American pluralism and identity at Bergen Community College were:

- To infuse material into existing courses in American literature and American history,

- To create new courses, one in "American Ethnic Literature" and a History course in "Diversity and Unity",
- To conduct a speakers' series during the Fall 1996 semester,
- To set up a discussion group comprised of faculty in literature and history to address infusion issues as well as plans for curricular implementation,
- To address that part of the college Mission Statement which calls upon the college community "to develop in students an understanding and appreciation . . . of the diversity of our pluralistic society."

3. Upon returning to campus after the AACC conference in Washington, D.C., we set up a committee of members of the English and history faculties which met on several occasions during Spring and Fall 1996. We arranged through our Faculty Development program a speakers' series, and held three lectures at the college: on October 10 Dr. Mia Anderson of the Bergen Community College English Department spoke on "Out of the Air-Tight Cage: Re-Visioning Teaching and Learning"; on November 14, as part of his site visit, Dr. David Trask, project mentor and Professor of History at Guilford Technical Community College, spoke on "Is There a Crisis of Community in America? Why Us? Why Now?"; on December 12 Dr. Edward Countryman, Professor of History at Southern Methodist University, spoke on the subject of his new book, "Americans: A Collision of Histories."

In his American Literature I course, Dr. Alan Kaufman revised his syllabus to make it more inclusive. Much of the course was built around the questions of what divides and brings Americans together, and what do we have in common; there was considerable material in the course by early African American and Native American authors such as Phillis Wheatley, Harriet Jacobs, F.E.W. Harper, Frederick Douglass, George Copway, and William Apess, and much of the work by standard authors such as Franklin, Whitman and Thoreau was selected for its involvement with such issues as abolitionism. Dr. Kaufman also prepared a bibliography of secondary materials on American pluralism and identity, distributed to members of the diversity committee and faculty members in American literature and history, and developed a new course in American Ethnic Literature, for which he is

working to get general education approval.

In the Spring 1996 semester Professor Matthew Panczyk, History, participated in a faculty-student panel entitled "A Quest for Common Ground: E Pluribus Unum." This panel drew further attention to the national conversation on Pluralism and Identity televised at Bergen Community College in October, 1995, which had initiated Bergen's participation in the "Exploring America's Communities" project.

In the Fall of 1996, Professor Panczyk infused a Pluralism and Identity component into a Contemporary Issues and Problems history course. The purpose of the module was, first, to elicit student self-description of his/her ethnic identity with a questionnaire; second, to present a brief overview of immigration and focus on the four project questions (What does it mean to be an American? What divides us? What brings us together? What do we have in common?); and third, to ascertain in a short, open-ended essay if the students became, over the course of the semester, more sensitive to the issue of American Pluralism and Identity. A brief bibliography accompanies the module. Part of the course included student attendance at the first Native-American Day Celebration at BCC in September. The data from Professor Panczyk's pilot module will be analyzed to ascertain the usefulness of this pedagogical approach. If deemed useful, the module will be piloted in the United States History survey course.

Professor Panczyk has designed a general approach to the teaching of a proposed history course entitled "Diversity and Unity." The history faculty will continue to discuss the proposed course during the Spring 1997 semester.

In addition to the brief bibliography prepared for the pilot history module, Professor Panczyk is preparing a general bibliography which will be distributed to history and other interested faculty members.

4. The greatest obstacle we confronted at Bergen Community College was the simple impediment of having too little time. Because the project ran only over one year and not over an academic year, but over Spring 1996 and then Fall 1996, with a summer stuck right in the project's middle, it was difficult

to establish continuity in our work. The Spring semester was devoted primarily to planning: to arranging the speakers' series for Fall 1996, to establishing an advisory committee, to scheduling Dr. Kaufman and Professor Panczyk in the courses that the Action Plan required them to teach. This left only the Fall 1996 semester for much of the work. Because colleagues' schedules are so busy and so varied, and because people had other commitments and the college itself schedules so many competing activities, it was difficult for our committee to meet and difficult for all interested faculty members to be present at such activities as lectures. Greater time would have enabled us to plan events earlier and might have contributed to greater participation from interested faculty members.

Another obstacle that we faced was that there are several groups at the college concerned with issues of diversity, and at times we all seemed to work without the coordination that could have enhanced all of our efforts. Again, more time might have enabled us to achieve greater coordination among these groups.

At Bergen Community College there are no required courses in either history or literature; rather all courses offered by the two programs are humanities electives, and, as such, unfortunately, we are in unavoidable competition for students. Whether or not this situation suggests a third obstacle was debated. During Fall 1996, the historians and literature professors met together in an on-going discussion group, and held fruitful discussions and shared ideas about how to infuse issues of diversity into their courses. In the course of these sometimes heated discussions, inevitable differences arose. Some faculty favored rather complete revision of course syllabi while others appeared to favor more of a modular approach to infusion. Questions arose and were discussed about whether survey courses should aim for coverage or be designed around questions (like what does it mean to be an American?). Disagreements like these, which are by no means unique to Bergen Community College, arose between members of the same discipline as well as between literature people and historians. And while such discussions are useful and can be invigorating, they could perhaps also suggest collaborative difficulties. To continue discussing these important issues and moving along in our plan to infuse issues of pluralism and identity into American-content courses, we are considering establishing a reading group for

interested members of the history and literature disciplines after the project is over; perhaps such a continuing and on-going group can contribute to further collaboration between these two intimately related humanities disciplines.

5. The groundwork has been laid for institutionalizing this project. The college community in general participated in the project, principally through discussions and attendance at lectures. During the Spring 1997 semester, the history discipline will be refining the Pluralism and Identity pilot module into a United States History II survey course. The development of a new history course, "Diversity and Unity," will continue with input from members of the History, Sociology, and Psychology disciplines. A general history bibliography will be distributed to interested faculty, and will include a section on various approaches for assessing the great variety of materials available in the BCC library. We also plan to investigate the use of oral history as an approach to the teaching of pluralism and identity in history courses.

In American literature Dr. Kaufman will be teaching a revised version of his American literature II course, to include works by such authors as Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, Abraham Cahan, Leslie Marmon Silko, Etheridge Knight, Aurora Levins Morales. Much of the attention in the American literature area during Spring 1997 will be devoted to gaining approval for a new course in "American Ethnic Literature." The approval process is a long and time-consuming one: first, three four-year feeder colleges have to accept the course for general education credit; next, the literature work group must agree to add the course to its offerings, after which the course must be approved by the college-wide curriculum committee. Finally, the course must be debated and approved by the Faculty Senate of the college.

As we continue our work, we look for what President Sheldon Hackney of the National Endowment for the Humanities has called a ripple effect to occur at Bergen Community College.

6. A significant number of the literature and history faculty at Bergen Community College have an interest in diversity that predates the work of the "Exploring America's Communities" project. These colleagues continue to reinforce issues of pluralism and identity in their courses. As part of the mission

of the college is to foster understanding of American pluralism and diversity, members of the administration have supported the project. President Winn has emphasized the need for all members of the BCC community to learn more about one another. In her October 1996 newsletter, she pointed out that BCC has students from over ninety-eight countries and encouraged an increased "understanding of our differences and similarities."

Student reaction to the project has been favorable. In their responses to the project's four questions, students spoke over and over of the importance of our freedom. Students were optimistic about our ability to act at individuals and, at the same time, to work together harmoniously, as they assert we did during Desert Storm. Pride in being an American came across strongly in student responses, as did an awareness that Americans are obliged to "stand up for what you believe in" and "accept others' cultures." As to what divides us, some students felt it was a lack of understanding of different groups, ethnic and racial ones in particular. Further, students felt that mutual respect, toleration, and learning about other groups will help to overcome these situations. This belief in the power of education is an encouraging one; now we must continue to function as a scholarly community should: to bring an informed awareness to the solid instincts that so many of our students have.

Team members:

- Alan Kaufman, Associate Professor, English
- Matthew Panczyk, Associate Professor, History
- Amparo Codding, Associate Professor and Program Coordinator, Foreign Languages, Project Administrator

Black River
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Introduction

Now in its sixth year as an institution of higher education, Black River Technical College was founded twenty-five years ago as a vocational-technical school serving the almost totally homogenous white population of rural northeast Arkansas. Since the transition to a two-year college, BRTC has doubled its size, with its 1,200 students now split evenly between those in the college transfer and those in the technical divisions. The community's historical farm base dwindled while its industrial segment grew in the past two decades, but the predominantly low-tech job market has suffered tremendously from foreign competition in the past year. The severest blow came last year with the closure of the community's oldest and largest employer, Brown Shoe company, which at the time employed over ten percent of the community's total work force. The result: Randolph County's jobless rate is today the highest in the state. BRTC has stepped forward to provide re-training and other educational opportunities for a significant number of these and other displaced workers of all ages, many of whom have lived and worked their entire lives in this community. Their arrival at BRTC coincided with the college's entry into the "Exploring America's Communities" project, and their presence here simultaneously affirms the need and enhances the possibilities of this humanities project at BRTC.

Primary Goals

Our proposal's centerpiece is "The Century Wall," a large mural which is to depict the faces of 100 Americans who, in all their pluralities of color, religion, and ethnic identities, have made a difference in shaping the 20th Century. The project includes a student researched/student written booklet which contains a keyed schemata and short biographies of the 100. Thus the

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wall will serve as a unique sort of silent but eloquent educator for all of us: for those who live and work here, for those who pass through, and for students of all ages from the region. By involving our staff, students and the entire community in developing and selecting those to be depicted on the mural, we hoped to increase awareness, understanding, and appreciation of America's incredibly rich and beautiful diversity. The need for such understanding is especially great here at BRTC, where so many of us have lived in near-total isolation from other cultures, and where many at this time in their lives feel deep economics-driven resentment and distrust of large segments of America's peoples. We hoped also that the project would serve as a catalyst for multicultural curricular enhancement opportunity.

Accomplishments

From the beginning press announcing BRTC's proposal, community interest has been remarkably keen. Following generous coverage in a regional newspaper, a widely-read columnist featured the proposal, and even devised his own rather significant "list" of people for the wall. Thus began the input and conversation from people-- wherever we team members went--about who might be depicted on the wall. One of our earlier formal activities included letter surveys to our colleagues at Arkansas State University, as well as to local organizations and schools. We promised that any eligible name submitted would be considered, and that any group responding would be acknowledged in the booklet, and by the end of the spring semester, the list of nominees was quite interesting, and growing daily.

Summer activity on the project included contacting prospective muralists and learning about the art of mural painting, as well as working on our own reading lists and planning infusion activities for the fall semester.

By the beginning of the fall faculty workshops, the English faculty had decided to include in

the syllabus for all Freshman I and II composition students the required reading of a multiculturally appropriate novel which would yield opportunity for dialogue and essay writing. Novels which represent Asian American, Mexican American, Native American, and African American literature were selected and coordinated. Response on this activity has been overwhelmingly positive, both from the students and from faculty. Portfolios of student writings, as well as consensus from the faculty, have led to the commitment to repeat the activity in the spring 1997 semester. At its conclusion, final assessment activities will determine whether to make the curricular change a permanent one, and what, if any, modifications to make. It appears very likely the faculty will adopt the infusion as a curricular change.

A second highly successful and positive infusion activity included a joint project with the Dietary Management department. The English faculty selected and distributed to Food Science student four multicultural short stories, each of which focused in some way on the topic of food. The Food Science class then met jointly in four separate class periods with the respective English or Fiction classes for discussion and activity relative to the four stories. Here, too, student writings in response to the activity indicate the project was a valuable one, which benefited not only the dietary students, but Gen Ed students as well. A further outgrowth of the activity is a request from the Dietary instructor for further collaboration in assisting her students to develop culturally specific nutrition brochures for use in her Community Nutrition class.

Government students were busy with a focused study on the role of the media in shaping our perceptions of ethnic groups in America. The activity will be repeated in the spring semester, and as with the English infusion activity, evaluated and assessed for possible inclusion into the curriculum on a permanent basis.

Other students, meanwhile, were involved in gathering continued community input into "The

Century Wall." Approximately 30 members (or future members) of Phi Theta Kappa manned booths at four separate community events: Randolph County Fair, Maynard Pioneer Days, Old Davidsonville State Park Rendezvous, and Indian Summer Arts and Crafts Festival. Visitors numbering in the thousands actually submitted up to five nominations for the wall. Students later sorted through the forms, eliminating duplications, and added the nominees to an ever growing "master list" of names. Similar activities were conducted at local civic club meetings.

Remaining activity

Interestingly, the phenomenon of such high level of community interest has proven a mixed blessing. The mayor, along with members of the Chamber of Commerce and others, expressed interest in locating the mural in a planned River Front Park currently under development instead of on the downtown building sites being considered. This consideration, along with such obstacles as the necessity of actually constructing a wall, financing the construction, gaining approval of the Park Committee, avoiding the flood plain, and ensuring architectural integration with the Park's design, etc., have resulted in numerous delays in the decision on the location of the mural. Our original timeline indicated the mural painting would commence in the spring of 1997; this time frame is still possible, but may face further delay.

Although the humanities team had planned a joint project with the Developmental Reading instructor, whereby those students would read multiculturally appropriate children's stories in local schools and day care centers, the project was not completed. A framework for this activity has been developed, and an English faculty member has agreed to coordinate it in the spring semester. Here the obstacle in completion was simply trying to do too much--planning beyond what our time and commitments would allow us to accomplish.

Completion of the booklets for "The Century Wall" is planned for the spring semester,

when a class of Freshman English II students will pair up with a Desktop Publishing class to collaborate on the researching, writing and production of the booklets. The students will work in pairs, one business student, one English student, with each pair responsible for four biographies. Additionally, the student teams will become a part of a BRTC "Speaker's Bureau," and will be asked to find at least one "public" forum where they will jointly present their experience. The focus will be to strengthen the students' critical thinking abilities by asking them to consider "What do these individuals have in common, both with each other and with me?"

Response

"My students were clearly affected," said one instructor who taught The Joy Luck Club. "They read the novel and then saw the movie. They cried. They discussed the story, they related their own feelings about their mothers, and they kept stressing they never knew how much we have in common with people of different cultures." Another student, whose readings included A Lesson Before Dying and Their Eyes Were Watching God, wrote, "With the combination of the stories and class discussion, the distance we've come as a human race and how far we have to go has become very evident." Especially remarkable was this statement from a student, who, after reading The Education of Little Tree, admitted this was the first book he had ever read in its entirety, and wrote: "I don't read much, maybe because I don't have the time or willpower to start. I waited until the last minute to start on this book. Although I didn't want to begin, after I started reading I couldn't put the book down. This book contains many morals and small lessons. I enjoyed it the most because I learned a lot about Indians and their culture. I had heard and learned about Indians and how they were treated, but never realized the reality of it until this book."

Exploring America's Community: A Progress Report from Bronx Community College

Bronx Community College, founded in 1958, is the oldest of the six community colleges in the City University of New York, a multi-campus urban university complex serving the needs of 100,000 students annually. With an enrollment of approximately eight thousand students, Bronx Community offers 26 major curricula which prepare students both for advanced studies at four-year colleges and vocational training in diverse occupational careers. Because the college draws its students from a variety of minority communities, many of which are composed primarily of immigrants and children of immigrants, Bronx Community College is an ideal laboratory in which to explore the question, "What does it mean to be an American?"

Ethnically, the college is approximately 40 per cent African-American and 49 per cent Hispanic, but these numbers disguise the diversity of individuals within these categories. The college has a significant population of English speaking immigrants from the Caribbean who are generally numbered among the African-American population. There are also many students from Africa attending the college who hope to become United States citizens. The Hispanic population includes a large percentage of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, as well as immigrants from almost every country in South and Central America. As is common with many community colleges, Bronx students tend to be older on average than traditional college freshmen and sophomores, and, as in most urban community college, females predominate. Although the college is located in an area most often cited for its urban decay and the poverty of its inhabitants, the college itself is an island of tranquillity and a haven for study. Its 56-acre campus includes landmark buildings from the turn of the last century and the original Hall of Fame of Great Americans.

In order to serve the needs of its graduates, most of whom go on to four-year schools, the college has retained a basic core of courses, common to all curricula within which English Composition and Literature, World History, Communications, Language study, and Music and Art

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appreciation are major components. Core courses such as these help ensure that all students who graduate will have the ability to discuss concepts central to the humanities. They also awaken students to complex issues, including pluralism and diversity in American society. These issues have particular relevance to the students at Bronx Community College because most of them are learning what it means to be an American as they strive to capture a piece of the "American dream."

The Bronx Community College action plan was drafted to improve both our core curriculum and the college's teaching and learning about American pluralism and identity. The plan addressed a perceived lack in cohesion in the Liberal Arts core curriculum and the need, in light of a recent curriculum revision, to provide more rigorous academic experiences in humanities courses. The perceived lack of cohesion in curricula offerings arose because, although each course in various academic departments is excellent in and of itself, there was no overriding, integrating theme or content to tie the collection of core courses into an academic whole. Additionally, candidates for Liberal Arts AA degree are now obliged to show that they have taken at least two "enhanced" courses, courses which provide additional educational experiences and stress writing and creative thinking. The AACC call for a proposal to enhance teaching and learning about pluralism seemed to provide a heaven-sent opportunity because the theme of American identity in a pluralistic society would provide a vehicle both for constructing enhanced activities and for integrating the core curriculum thematically. If a series of enhanced units, addressing American pluralism and identity, could be grafted on to existing courses in various departments, the entire core curriculum would become both more rigorous and more cohesive. This was the challenge we set ourselves through the Exploring America's Communities project. As a first step in achieving this broader goal, representatives from three academic disciplines (Communication, English Literature and History) agreed to develop exercises on this common theme. Reports from each of the disciplines follow.

a) **Communications** - In the CMS 11 (Fundamentals of Interpersonal Communication) class, it was fairly easy to integrate material on pluralism into the course content because intercultural communication is one of the units of the course. Our students certainly understand

that there are many co-cultures within our own country. To help the students understand the implications of cultural and co-cultural identity, students read articles dealing with nonverbal communication in different cultures. It was clear to them that when individuals from different cultures use different kinds of nonverbal communication, misunderstandings can arise. The increased awareness of how culture affects all types of communication allowed students to share freely examples from their own cultures and the problems that have arisen for them. They also discussed the stresses that they have undergone because of their multiple cultural memberships. They certainly understand what divides us; it is more difficult for them to deal with issues of "What do we have in common?" and "What does it mean to be an American?" Many of our students feel that what it means to be an American is defined by someone other than those in their cultural group. As one student wrote, the definition is written by individuals "who are in positions of power." On the other hand, the students recognize that they are in college because they have adopted the American belief in effort-optimism, the belief that hard work will pay off. They realize that some cultures have the attitude that individuals can do little to change their future, while in the United States individuals believe that they are able to control their fate.

We also discussed attitudes that diminish understanding and make intercultural contacts so frustrating. Because culture affects so many aspects of our lives, it can be a barrier to effective communication. This is especially likely if we hold negative attitudes about cultural differences. The class discussed how stereotypes and prejudices have been a barrier in other people's understanding of them and in their understanding of others. From this discussion, students did point out that unless we admit that differences do not always mean deficiencies, and that our own culture is not necessarily superior in all things, we will never be able to establish the trust and respect that are necessary counterparts of intercultural interaction.

b) **English** - An enhanced unit, "Poetry of a Diverse People," used in ENG 16 (Written Composition and Poetry), had mixed results. The class read American poets voicing the concerns of many and varied ethnic groups, then discussed how individuals and groups interact with one another. This did not prompt a clear and readily accepted "least common denominator" definition

for "American" in phrases such as African-American, Hispanic-American, Chinese-American, and Native-American. For the students, the typical "American" remained a white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant. They remarked on the persuasiveness of the image formed by the media. Although the exercise was successful in that it broadened the cannon of American poetry and involved the class directly in poetry itself, it did not evoke a clear idea of what unites us as Americans. Rather it seems to have sharpened perceived ethnic differences. The students could articulate how each cultural group fits in the spectrum of ethnicities within American society, but not how individuals in those groups could better relate to the mythic image of the WASP American.

If anything, the materials and activities made the class more aware of gaps which continue to exist between members of all the ethnic, racial, and cultural groups represented in the classroom. Even discussions of the universal themes and concerns of poetry failed to ignite a common flame which would make the students more comfortable with the concept of "an American." Participants in class discussion took away a heightened aesthetic and philosophical understanding of poetry, and came to see it is a vehicle by which Americans might find commonalties despite their varied ethnic backgrounds. Nevertheless, the students recognized the great chasms that separate us all and the folly of labeling people because of their race, ethnic group, appearance, or culture. The class also saw reasons for doing so and the difficulties faced in trying to erect bridges between different cultural groups.

c) **History** - Students in HIS 20 (The American Experience), a one semester survey of United States History, were given two additional reading assignments, one on assimilation, the other on ethnic adaptation. The former, drawn from Alan M. Krant's, The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society, 1880-1921 (1982), dealt with problems confronting new comers in the period 1880-1910 and their various stratagems for becoming American. In general, those immigrants and their children turned their backs on their roots and uncritically adopted most of what passed for American behavior. The latter article, drawn from Elliott R. Barkan's, And Still They Come: Immigrant and American Society, 1920 to the 1990's (1996), dealt with the reaction of the grandchildren of immigrants, during the 1960s and 70s, their affirmations of self worth

through ethnic identity, and their rejection of the "melting pot" theory of Americanization. After analyzing these readings, students were asked "What is it that Americans do or should have in common?" Bronx Community College's immigrants and children of immigrants were reminded that "even if they visit the country their parents come from, they are treated by law, and usually in fact as different because they are American citizens." They were asked, "What, in your estimation, does it means to be an American?"

The answers were varied but interesting. The least common denominator for all these students was that to be an American means to be free from cultural constraints and long-established customs associated with the cultures from which they or their parents had emigrated. Pressed to concretize their perceptions, most ended up articulating statements of freedom which mirror the Bill of Rights. The more carefully they developed their ideas, the more closely their concepts resembled classical liberalism. Equality of opportunity, careers open to talent, the freedom to enjoy what they have won by the fruits of their labor; these are still powerful ideas, and, for our immigrant population, an important part of what it means to be an American.

Because we have enjoyed excellent institutional support there have been virtually no obstacles to implementing our action plan. The catalyst provided by the mentor's visit and the staff development activities of various departments have already generated considerable interest in our project. Each of the project members will continue to use and refine the enhanced modules, incorporating questions concerning identity and pluralism into his or her courses. A great deal needs to be done, however. Additional faculty have to be brought into the process and additional courses have to be brought on stream. Through in-house faculty development this can be done, but it will be a long and slow process. Funds are being sought to allow expanded faculty development so that we can accelerate integration of units on pluralism and diversity across the curriculum.

As a final word, the students who participated in the initial phase of the project have arrived at a fuller understanding of what defines us and unites us as Americans. By looking at

other cultures, they have developed a better concept of their own sense of place in this country. In addition, the faculty involved have each benefited because they too have asked and tried to answer the same questions. Nevertheless, the question, "What makes us an American?" remains very difficult to resolve, even in a situation such as ours, in which we witness the struggle of new Americans actively engaged in trying to find meaningful personal solutions to this conundrum.

Professor James D. Ryan
Professor Carolyn Liston
Professor Isabel Mirsky

BUTLER COUNTY COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES

Progress Report

December 17, 1996

Introduction

Butler County Community College serves Butler County which lies in Western Pennsylvania and is partly rural, partly industrial, and partly suburban. The College admitted its first students in 1966. At the beginning of this term, Fall 1996, student enrollment in credit courses was 3,098; eighty students have been identified as minority students, fifty of those as African American, six as Native American, fifteen as Asian or Pacific Islanders and nine as Hispanic. This population mix, heavily White, non-Hispanic represents the mix in the community.

Action Plan Goals

Because the local population is overwhelmingly non-minority, the general goal of the Action Plan was to revise syllabi of several courses to include contributions of minority communities which students might otherwise never know.

A. American History. The two-semester American history survey sequence needed to be revised to incorporate more social and cultural history. The first major task would be choosing new textbooks in order to encourage us to think in new ways. A pre- and post-course student inventory would also need to be devised

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to assess any understanding of the new material which students may have brought with them and whether our instruction had had any effect.

B. Fine Arts. The task in Fine Arts was to examine content sections of Introduction to Art, Introduction to Music, and Literature and the Arts syllabi for possible inclusion of American works which would reflect American plurality. Pre- and post-course student inventories were to be devised and administered.

C. American Literature. The task in American literature was to revise the syllabi of the two American literature survey courses to include authors from American communities heretofore unrepresented. Because the revision was to be extensive, the syllabi needed the approval of the Humanities/Social Science Division, the College's Academic Affairs Committee, and the Faculty Organization.

Accomplishments

A. American History. Ellen Dodge coordinated the revisions for American history. New textbooks have been selected for the survey sequence: Norton et al, A People and a Nation, and Stephen B. Oates anthology, Portrait of America. Three faculty members who teach Early United States History collectively chose articles from the Oates anthology to assign as student reading, and they either helped draft or approved the inventory. The syllabus for Early United States History was revised. The pre- and post course inventory was administered to all students in Early United States History.

B. Fine Arts. Maggie Stock conferred with music and art instructors about inclusion of Americana from our communities into their courses. A section of the music course was devoted to American music, and students attended a concert of the music of American composers. Art students completed projects on American artists. Several new library resources have been ordered and will be incorporated into the course bibliographies.

C. American Literature. Dave Anderson coordinated the revisions in American literature. New texts have been selected for adoption that include a broader selection of writers. The American literature syllabi have been approved by all required groups and are ready for implementation in the Spring of 1997.

Obstacles

A. One minor obstacle to coordination was geography. One of the Early United States History sections and one of the Introduction to Art sections were taught at off-campus which meant some additional effort in communication with instructors.

B. Although colleagues were generally cooperative, it was necessary, from time to time, to counter fears that the project was somehow threatening to academic freedom. It was helpful to confer with concerned faculty members on a one-on-one basis. There was some small concern that the inclusion of the contributions of minority communities into the study of selected courses would lead to the exclusion of our founding fathers and those traditionally studied. Although the concern does not merit being labelled an obstacle, it has been difficult to convince the concerned faculty member otherwise.

C. There would seem to be no obstacles as far as students are concerned.

Tasks Remaining

A. The syllabi for Recent United States History (the second semester of the American history sequence), Introduction to Art, and Introduction to Music have yet to be revised.

B. An inventory/post-test for Recent United States history has yet to be formulated.

C. A study of the inventory/post-test in American history reveals that not as much change in knowledge of America's various communities has been gained as had been desired.

Discussions with Students

During the term, there have been discussions with students as to just what we were trying to accomplish with the America's Communities project. At the end of the term, several questions were put to a number of classes involved in the changing curriculum. The questions and a summary of their collective responses follow.

A. What does it mean to be an American? Students opined that the freedom to pursue individual dreams makes us uniquely American. We have always been able to "start over," to be willing to change direction.

B. What divides us? There was no doubt among students that there are, indeed, factors which divide us: ethnicity, religion, and money. Ironically, as one class suggested, our individual rights actually divide us as special interest groups vie for their

separate and sometimes conflicting goals.

C. What brings us together? Americans are united for optimistic cuases such as the recent Olympics in Atlanta. But tragedies join us as well--as in national tragedies such as the Oklahoma City bombing.

D. What do we have in common? The American Dream is our common goal. That dream founded the country and maintains our form of government. Our recent, shared history unites us and makes us unique among nations.

Conclusion

This project allowed several faculty members the chance to reflect on the diversity of America's communities. While we on the project cannot take any credit for it, this fall the College Cultural Community Series included a performance by Jack Gladstone, a Native American storyteller, as well as a concert by Guaracha, a Latin American band. Futhermore, the new Multi-cultural Club, founded this semester, is sponsored by a faculty member not directly involved with the Exploring America's Communities project. The AACC project and these activities are fostering growing interest in America's diverse communities.

Carroll Community College

Carroll Community College is a comprehensive institution with credit and non-credit courses in transfer, career, and technical programs. Although the college has been in existence since 1976, it did not become a degree-granting institution until 1993. Until then, it operated as a campus of Catonsville Community College, which is part of the Baltimore County system. The college is located in Westminster, the county seat of Carroll County, an area of family farms and small communities northwest of Baltimore that is gradually becoming suburban. Our students are primarily from white, middle class families, though our minority population does reflect the demographics of the county itself. The student body consists of approximately 2500 credit students and 6000 non-credit students. In 1995, 46% of the county population enrolled in institutions of higher learning were attending Carroll Community College. The college is also a community center. Carroll Countians use the art gallery space, athletic fields, and conference facilities.In addition, the community patronizes college events such as concerts, films, and poetry readings.

The Action Plan of the Carroll team has several components. We wanted to upgrade the American Studies Concentration that has been listed in our catalog for several years, but has not been the choice of many students. Our proposal was to make the concentration more attractive to students and to find ways for faculty members who teach the courses making up the concentration to unify goals and share approaches to the material. The Action Plan that we put together in Washington last spring called for all faculty members involved in American Studies to identify common themes taught in all the courses and

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to articulate new goals and objectives for the program. The plan also included creating a new, interdisciplinary course as part of the American Studies curriculum and planning for faculty development programs dealing with American pluralism and identity.

The team of faculty members who teach the courses in the American Studies program (American government, American literature, U.S. History, and sociology) began meeting in late spring. By August we had identified a list of themes that we felt best identified the American spirit and that we all either currently dealt with in our courses or could include without changing our basic approaches to our subject matter. These themes are The American dream/destiny, individualism, regionalism and rootedness, the migration experience, egalitarianism, the Puritan ethic, and pluralism. We all agreed to rewrite our syllabi to make the themes more recognizable and prominent. This will enable students enrolling in American Studies to instantly see the ties between the courses. We also began planning for a spring speakers series, hopefully funded by a grant from the Maryland Humanities Council, to publicize the American Studies concentration to prospective students and to provide faculty development opportunities. The speakers will be asked to deal with the themes we have identified as the core of our program.

During this same time period, the two faculty members who will team teach the new interdisciplinary course were working to put it together. The course is entitled "A Sense of Place: Exploring Our American Identity," with a humanities designation. It includes literature, history, and geography and applies the themes identified above to six regions: New England, the South, the Industrial Heartland, the Great Plains, the Southwest, and the West. The course looks at the effects of history and geography on the literature of each area and the contributions of each region to American pluralism and identity.

A final part of our plan was to set up future faculty development programs for faculty members who teach required reading, writing, literature, and speech classes, to encourage them to look at American pluralism and identity with their students. We could see benefits in this approach for American

Studies students, because even more of their courses would be tied together, and for the entire student body as well.

When our mentor, Dr. Jo Marshall, visited our campus in October, all of the pieces of our plan came together in a way we hadn't anticipated. As we spoke with her, the idea of creating a community of learners, which had been discussed briefly in earlier sessions, became our central theme. Before the day was out, we had decided to work toward scheduling American Studies students together in time-blocked core courses. Suddenly we had a built-in recruiting campaign and the opportunity for strongly forged ties among the faculty members who would be part of this learning community. The conversations about the American identity they had been creating since the beginning of the planning process would continue indefinitely once students became part of it.

When Dr. Marshall and the team met with instructors of required reading, writing, literature, and speech classes to introduce them to their role in our future plans, the enthusiasm that many of them expressed about the project gave us another idea. Why not include them in the new learning community we were creating right away rather than waiting until after we had set up our future faculty development project? The administrators meeting with us during the day were enthusiastic about the ideas that were being generated at a fast pace, and gave us the go-ahead to put the program into effect for next fall.

Since October, we have put together a two-year course of study for American Studies students that groups their required humanities courses, both for the concentration and for general college requirements, in time blocks. The courses for fall, 1997, are already in place in the schedule. They include Sociology 101, English 101, and Humanities 111, A Sense of Place: Exploring Our American Identity. These courses will meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:00-11:00 a.m. The faculty members who will be teaching the courses will be sharing texts, assignments, and field trips. (For example, the papers written in English 101 will be on topics generated in the other two classes. One book of readings used in Humanities 111 will also be a text in English 101. The entire group can take trips to any one of a large number of regional landmarks that are relevant in all three courses.) We are hoping to encourage

continuation of conversations begun during class time by having the entire group of students and instructors go to lunch together. Another learning group will form in the spring when three more faculty members--those teaching American Government, English 102, and Speech 101--become part of the project. American Studies students will take American literature and American history together in a similar time block in their second year.

We have created a brochure advertising our program which our recruiters are already taking with them as they visit local high schools. The recruiters feel that this program gives them an excellent opportunity to "sell" the college. In the spring, faculty members in the American Studies program will accompany recruiters as they travel around the county. We will also be sending out a series of publicity releases and are planning to meet with high school English and history teachers to enlist their support for the program. We are hoping that our speakers series, which will be open to the public, will generate a conversation between the college and the community about the nature of the American identity.

While we have not yet had the opportunity to engage in formal conversations with students about what it means to be an American, all of us have been talking about the program with students we now have in class and the response has been positive. In fact, some current students have decided to switch to the American Studies program that is now in the catalog. The responses of our colleagues have also been positive. All the college personnel we have had to work with to get the program in place have gone out of their way to accomodate us. We feel that we are hurtling along on a fast train right now, but the destination will be well worth the ride!

I. CENTRAL FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Central Florida Community College was established in 1958 and now serves about 6,000 credit students with approximately 30,000 involved in non-credit programs. Our three campuses in the tri-county area of Marion, Levy, and Citrus counties serve a largely rural population of approximately 332,000. Our main campus is in Ocala (selected the fifth best place to live in the U.S. by Money Magazine in 1995). In addition to three campuses, CFCC boasts several venues offering cultural events as well as instruction: the CFCC Exhibit Center hosts traveling exhibitions and lectures; the Brick City Center for the Arts is a focal point for visual and performing artists; and the Appleton Museum of Art (jointly owned with Florida State University), a large art museum with an extensive collection of western and non-western art.

II. GOALS OF THE PROJECT

Our principal goals were to promote conversation among CFCC faculty about American identity and to assist in carrying these discussions into the classroom. The primary mechanism was a series of faculty "brown bag" round table discussions.

III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A. Brown Bag Discussion Series

The faculty "Brown Bag" sessions proved a great success. At the first session, Humanities Instructor John Mathews offered a historical sketch of 19th- and 20th-century immigration to America. Adjunct History Instructor Darrell Riley discussed varying conceptions of American identity over the past two centuries. Finally, Education Instructor Jana Bernhardt presented examples of how history textbooks have changed in the past century.

At the second session, Communications Instructor Debra Vazquez outlined America's rich literary heritage and pointed up the fact that not only is there a multitude of talented Asian-, African- and Latino-American authors currently working in this country, but that there has been for centuries. Also, by having those present read several short works, she demonstrated that questions of pluralism and identity are profoundly expressed by these authors.

In the third session, Humanities Instructor Ron Cooper used audio recordings to show that the presence of similar musical structures within American vernacular styles illustrates the borrowing among poor, rural musicians and songwriters of varying ethnicity. Communications Instructor Joe Zimmerman used D. W. Griffith's The Birth of A Nation to exemplify how American film, even from one of our most gifted filmmakers, has perpetuated racial stereotypes.

The series drew fifteen to twenty faculty members to each session, and each was video taped for viewing and discussion on our other campuses. One luncheon was attended by CFCC's new president during his first week on campus.

B. Interdepartmental Discussion Session

In another key segment of our faculty development element of the project, Dr. Daniel Rivas of Saddleback College addressed the entire faculty and challenged the college to continue to grapple with questions surrounding American identity in all disciplines. After his address, Dr. Rivas joined the members of the Humanities & Social Sciences and Communications & Fine Arts Divisions for a prolonged discussion.

C. Film Series

This year's CFCC Film Series included My Family (1995), about several generations of a Mexican-American family's successful struggle to survive in Anglo-American dominated society, and Powwow Highway (1988), about the picaresque exploits of a young Native American and his white companion. Both films were followed by discussions led by CFCC faculty members.

D. New Courses

Two new courses were created. "Introduction to Multicultural Education" will be a prerequisite for admission to the educational departments at Florida's nine state universities. Topics include exploring American commonalities as well as appreciating our differences. The second new course, "Introduction to Children's Literature," includes an examination of American identity in a multicultural society.

E. Curriculum Revision

Two courses were revised by the addition of new materials. HUM 2450: American Humanities took "Search for Identity: Common Ground Within Diversity" as a guiding theme of the class. Students collaborated to produce a mural that will adorn a wall of the Student Lounge on the CFCC Citrus Campus. In addition, Diane Ravitch's The American Reader, a multicultural anthology, was added to the required reading for American Humanities. Also, Patricia Osborne's Finding America: The American Experience in Multicultural Literature is being considered for use in AML 2022: Survey of American Literature II.

IV. OBSTACLES

Our plan for a key-note speaker of national recognition to address the entire faculty was not implemented due to a lack of funds.

V. FUTURE EVENTS/REMAINING GOALS

In the spring of 1997, two series of events connected with the project will take place on campus: "Florida's Literary Heritage" will be a series of appearances and discussions by Florida writers, including Lola Haskins (poet and historian of 19th-century Florida women), Roberto Fernández (author of humorous and insightful novels of Cuban-Floridians) and Stetson Kennedy (pioneering folklorist and author of several books about the KKK and other hate groups).

In April there will be a series of lectures and panel discussions devoted to the theme "Intolerance and Understanding." These will complement the traveling exhibition "Anne

Frank in the World" at the CFCC Exhibit Center.

VI. RESPONSES OF STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES

There was no clear widely-accepted sense of what it means to be an American, other than our perception of ourselves as Americans. If anything, there was a feeling of E Pluribus, Pluribus, but we're still Americans, nevertheless.

The question of what divides us was easier to answer. The most frequent responses were color, class, ignorance of each other and fear.

Regarding what we have in common, students and faculty alike emphasized our shared political institutions (the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution), our economic institution of free-market capitalism tempered with government regulation, and our cultural institutions (with far more emphasis on the popular arts and mass media than on the fine arts and literature).

What brings us together? Most mentioned was the belief that despite the differences, we were still Americans. As one student said, "With all our differences, we're still an 'us'!"

CHESTERFIELD/MARLBORO
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

AACC
PROGRESS REPORT

Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College is a two year post-secondary institution. The college is located in the northeastern part of South Carolina and serves a large three-county geographic area. The area is rural, although over 12 new industries have located in the service area during the past twenty years. These new industries have brought diversity to our communities from countries of Germany, Japan, England, and France.

As one of sixteen technical, state supported two year colleges, Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College, established 1968, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The college offers a variety of associate degree, certificate, and diploma programs. Currently, there are 1026 students attending Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College in twenty-eight programs. A majority of the students are first generation college students and desire degrees, diplomas, or certificates that will lead to job placement, job advancement, or college/university transfer. The college has twenty-four full time faculty and approximately thirty-five part time faculty. Day and evening classes, distance learning classes, and off campus classes are provided.

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The College is committed to serving the residents of the region, to provide post-secondary educational opportunities and to provide students with a meaningful educational experience. During the 1996-97 academic year, the college is engaged in the process of an institutional-wide self study for reaffirmation of the Southern Associate of College and Schools. Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College is a growing institution in its twenty-sixth year of operation. Committed to the growth of the individual, the community and to the improvement of the quality of life for its citizens.

The primary goal of Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College's Action Plan was "to broaden the scope of its existing course offerings to include resources that could be used concurrently with both literature and history. These resources would focus on cultural pluralism and how that pluralism shaped the American identity."

I. **Anticipated Outcomes will be:**

A. increased awareness of the uniqueness of the American experience

B. recognition of the interconnectedness of American history and American literature

C. introducing the student to the diversity that is evident throughout the United States, in South Carolina, and the region served by Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College

D. strengthening the existing courses and curriculum

E. initiating the students exposure to common ground themes, individuals, and ethnic/cultural groups

F. building communication skills

II. **Strategy:**

Our plan will be to develop and implement concurrent United States History and American Literature courses focusing on the period following the Civil War and

Reconstruction. This will provide the greatest opportunity to infuse common ground themes and pluralism/diversity into a college-course sequence. The parallels in literature and history are relevant to any discussion of common ground themes and American pluralism.

Included in our plan will be the topical study and review of:

1. Native Americans
2. Afro-Americans
3. European Americans
4. Asian Americans
5. Historical and literary parallels

During the year, the team has followed the Action Plan that was developed at the Washington Conference. The plan included the development of a one-semester hour seminar course that would address the theme of integrating America literature and American history. This seminar cause will be offered concurrently with America Literature II and American History II with the historical time frame c.1890-1996. Course objectives have been developed, audiovisual resources identified and library holdings have been evaluated. A list of speakers is currently being developed and expanded.

The new seminar course has been designed to expose students to common unifying themes of the American experiences. The parallels between American literature and history will be examined over a fifteen week period. Students will meet for a one-hour weekly class session to discuss, interpret, and analyze the individuals and groups that define Americans. Topics will include an examination of Native-Americans, Africa-Americans, Asia-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and European-Americans contribution to the literature and history of the United States. Special emphasis will be

placed on interpreting the question, "What is an American and what has been the American experience?"

The AACC grant team requested the one credit hour seminar course to be included in the Catalog of Approved courses for the State Technical college system. This application was submitted by the College administration and was approved on November, 1996. The course will be facilitated by a team of English and History faculty and will be implemented in the Spring semester 1997. Approval for the designated course was received in November 1996.

Course outlines and syllabic revisions have been completed and reviewed by the team, Division Chairperson, and the NEH mentor. The new course, HIS 203, is included in the spring course schedule and all academic advisors in the Division of Arts and Sciences will be encouraging students to register. Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical college has developed an extensive resource list of audiovisual support materials for use in the seminar course. These purchases are dependent upon the availability of financial resources. Guest speakers will be dependent on two contingencies: honoraria and availability. The team has identified several speakers and, as indicated previously in the report, is continuing to seek appropriate individuals who would be willing to speak.

The site visit by the mentor was completed on November 21 and all components of the Action Plan were reviewed. The team is pleased to report that we have been ahead of schedule and feel that we have moved aggressively towards accomplishment our Action Plan.

As previously indicated, the college is developing its institutional self-study. All AACC team members are responsible for chairing self-study committees and for

preparing the self-study report. Additionally, the college is currently renovating some of its buildings. This necessitated some unanticipated moves of classrooms and faculty offices during the fall semester.

The team has had the opportunity to incorporate some of the objectives in the courses that were taught in the fall semester. Although our grant proposal and Action Plan identify both American History II and American Literature II as the focus of our efforts, the team faculty included common themes of "American culture" into the American history I and American Literature I courses.

The College faculty has been informed of the grant and met with the team to discuss the implementation of the plan in the Spring semester. Faculty in the Arts and Sciences Division were very receptive and enthusiastically support this major instructional effort. Through the mentor's's visit, Arts and Sciences faculty had the opportunity to receive an update on the grant proposal, to receive external support and encouragement of the project, and to have questions answered.

Overall, the major outcomes of the project will not be fully developed until the seminar course has been implemented in the Spring semester (January - May, 1997). The project is on-going and we do not foresee any major obstacles to completing the grant requirements. We hope that this project will serve as a springboard for more cross curricular efforts to integrate American themes into college courses.

The team will implement the final phase of the Action Plan in January 1997. This phase will include the implementation of the seminar course, registration of students in the course, dissemination of information to faculty advisers to promote the grant and the

seminar, and participation of a team member in the AACS National Conference in January.

The response of colleagues to the grant has been extremely positive. A spin-off to this grant activity will be to connect the objectives across the curriculum. The work that has been accomplished with our participation in the grant will also be applicable on a statewide level through the South Carolina International Education Consortium. Course outlines will reflect statewide initiatives to internalize courses in social sciences, humanities, and communication. The objectives that were developed for the seminar course will also be applicable to the efforts of the SCIEC. The AACC grant has had a positive impact not only for Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College's efforts to strengthen existing courses and curriculum, but also for statewide initiatives.

With full implementation targeted for January, the team will integrate the themes of American identity, the forces that divide and unite us, and what we as Americans have in common. Within the context of the seminar course, students will discuss and evaluate these major themes while exploring American literature and history.

COLLIN COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Spring Creek Campus
2800 E. Spring Creek Pkwy.
Plano, Texas 75074
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Collin County Community College, a three-campus district located in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, has grown since its inception (1986) serving 10,600 credit students (5474 FTEs) and 12,000 noncredit students. Two campuses serve suburban populations (82% student body). A third campus draws students (13%) from small towns and rural environments. Other sites serve another 5% of our student body. The female:male ratio is 58%:42%. Persons of color represent 17.27% of our student population (Hispanic 6.47%, Black 4.41%, Asian 5.51%, American Indian 0.87%).

Our Action Plan focused primarily upon integrating issues of American pluralism and identity into our core curriculum. We established some common ground with our faculty through small group discussions of some common readings. We also designed two learning communities to provide students with an in-depth opportunity to search for our commonalties as Americans while recognizing our different historical and cultural experiences. Our goals included extending the conversation outside classroom boundaries through a speakers' series capable of provoking students' critical thought, self-examination and response to the question "what does it mean to be an American?"

The vice president for instruction supported "Exploring America's Communities" as a major instructional theme which helped establish a receptive climate. Our Fall 1996 keynote speaker described and interpreted the implications of Texas' changing demographics for instruction at our meetings for our 400 part-time faculty. They also met in small groups to discuss readings to familiarize themselves with the issues and curricular implications of American pluralism and identity.

Full-time faculty, during their fall divisional meetings, also addressed readings through small group discussions facilitated by study questions designed by project team members. All faculty received an

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extensive annotated reading and film list whose titles were available in our excellent library collections.

Several hundred students enrolled in Introduction to Sociology sections viewed Min Wah's film "The Color of Fear" chronicling a series of frank discussions of racism and prejudice among men of different racial and cultural backgrounds. The film was an excellent teaching tool calling attention to the "silent consciousness of white privilege." Many students were initially resistant to the messages about the subtle, insidious and often unconscious forms of racism and prejudice that are perpetuated by "God-fearing, good, decent folk."

Students began to acknowledge that while minorities must understand the "white experience" in order to succeed in society, the opposite is not true. Areas of similarity then became the subject of class discussions. Having students practice listening to "others" as a means of diminishing defensiveness enhanced classroom experiences . Students wrote from the point of view of a person of color in response to the film rather than whether they agreed or disagreed with the sentiments expressed by the film's discussants.

Sociology students wrestled with the question "what is your ethnicity?" Initially, many white students resisted the concept of ethnic identity by responding "I am an American" believing ethnicity was not a factor for their own identity. Exploration of their ethnic identities (often blended ethnicities) became the focus for some of their research. Students came to believe "American" had been too narrowly defined and began to show an intense appreciation of multicultural perspectives and experiences. As students explored their own ethnicities, some began to express a sense of pride in "having a place in history." Negative stereotyping diminished as students gained an appreciation of the multicultural origins of many traditions, rituals and customs.

"The Tale of the Adventurous Ant," a parable, stimulated student reflection upon the limiting consequences of ethnocentricity. Read as a concluding activity in the semester, students synthesized much

of their recently acquired multicultural perspectives in their essays. Recognizing that while exploration of cultures other than their own could be "unsettling" and might "challenge their preconceived ideas of the world," most students preferred this to a monocentric view of society.

Many of the American history sections integrated the conversation throughout their survey course. One faculty member, teaching 200 students in 5 sections, used the concept of community as the catalyst for the introduction and conclusion of each course unit. Classes discussed, for example, the Native-American concept of community and then compared it with the European concept of community (kinship vs. nation-state). Conversations in class examined the rhetoric of democracy and the evolution of terms such as equality, the right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Lively discussion ensued in response to David Potter's article "The Civil War in the History of the Modern World" as students explored the balance between order vs. liberty and of nationalism vs. liberalism.

Many of the conversations in our courses (history, rhetoric, sociology, humanities, literature and ESL) were responses by students to our speaker series. Writer and storyteller Greg Howard of the Cherokee Nation spoke about the "first Americans" to more than 75 students while Ron Cowart, director of Refugee Affairs Office in Dallas, discussed the growing presence of Asian-American communities in our region. Eddie Stimpson, the son of a North Texas sharecropper and author of My Remembers, described the Jim Crow America of his youth while June Van Cleef, Professor of Photography, explored the disappearing rural communities of Texas.

Over 200 students, faculty and staff attended a forum on the issue of church burnings ("Crisis and Community") sponsored by the Interdisciplinary Honors Program in which six community representatives from Greenville, Texas presented a two-hour panel discussion on the causes, reactions and solutions these events. This forum and photo exhibits recording our changing landscape challenged students to identify shared American values and identify cultural elements common to all people.

Anchoring the project's instructional efforts were two fall semester learning communities. The Road to the White House explored America's communities by applying sociology to politics. Students studied race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, region and religion as factors contributing to our views of the political environment, candidates and national issues.

The learning community Rhetoric and the Republic was designed around a four-part project: Who Am I, Who Is The Other, What is a Community and finally What is My Community. Integrating our speakers' series into coursework, the class also went on a "City as a Classroom" field trip, exploring white and black communities in the city of Plano. The faculty team infused the course with the theme of America's communities. Whether discussing the post Civil War freedmen's community or the Southern communities of the Civil rights era, they wove the elements of differences and commonalities into the fabric of history and language use of each movement. The final course project solicited a thoughtful, researched response from students' probing their own private and public communities.

Some colleagues and students expressed a lack of interest in the questions posed by the project. Faculty were sometimes defensive, perhaps viewing the project as an exercise in "political correctness." Some students had to work through their defensiveness to acknowledge that prejudice was not just "in someone else's head" but was part of our community and national experiences. Intense reflective thinking is not an attribute of many first-semester first-time college students.

Heavy course schedules and commitment to college-wide task forces limited the ability of some faculty to participate in our forums. We were unable to interest more than 3 faculty in a proposed monthly reading group and abandoned that plan. Our team implemented so many opportunities to explore America's communities that we had some difficulty in trying to support our colleagues. In another vein, the national focus seemed to emphasize differences among Americans rather than a search for commonalities. Even the speakers at our regional conference invoked these differences and we returned to our campus without a

methodology to identify what Americans have in common. The short duration of our planning efforts and our head-long immersion into implementation was a function of the NEH timeline for this grant. This left us breathless and often unable to follow through with more measured conversations.

During the Spring 1997 semester, we will implement three learning communities which will each explore America's communities from the perspectives of four disciplines (history, rhetoric, sociology and political science). Several of our speakers will return to campus and we have received a number of suggestions from faculty for additional ones. Many faculty expressed continued support and will continue to infuse perspectives of pluralism in their courses. We will begin our oral history project in which students will interview and record narratives of county residents. We will share the outcomes of our classroom conversations with our colleagues which, we hope, will promote continued conversations among faculty, and students.

What have we learned from our students conversations? Students identified freedom, individualism and opportunity as defining American characteristics. Many students saw America as a place to become and to have possibilities. Dividing us was race, religion and money. The more reflective students identified racial, ethnic and religious differences as separating us. Students noted that tradition and crisis were elements which bring us together. In times of crisis, we support each other regardless of divisions. We share the Constitution, voting, freedom of speech, love of family and service to community. Some students identified a common need for a higher power and beliefs to explain creation. They saw our commonalities as love of freedom, a chance to better ourselves and an ability to be an individual.

Cumberland county college

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CUMBERLAND COUNTY COLLEGE PROGRESS REPORT--AACC

12/16/96

Cumberland County College is a small rural community college in Southern New Jersey. Cumberland County, with a population of 138,000, is the poorest county in a state where most of the wealth is in the North. The county has the highest unemployment rate along with the highest teenage pregnancy rate.

Enrollment in 1995-1996 was 2,500, including full- and part-time students. Half of the freshmen at Cumberland require remediation in math, English, and/or reading. Eighty percent of the students are the first in their families to attend college. During the 1995-1996 academic year, about one hundred students could be categorized as language minority students from among the 2,500 full- and part-time population. The majority of the full- and part-time students are women. The majority of minority students are African-American and Hispanic (predominantly of Puerto Rican origin); other groups represented include people from other parts of Latin America, Ukrainians (recent immigrants), and Native Americans.

Cumberland County College first opened its doors in 1966. It was the first of the New Jersey community colleges to open on its own campus. The area itself is lovely with easy access to Philadelphia (one hour), New York (two and a half to three hours), the shore (fifty minutes), and Washington (about three hours). Cumberland has an excellent reputation in the State of New Jersey, based primarily on tracking of students who have transferred from Cumberland to four-year colleges and who have done as well as or better than those students who began their education at the four-year college. The college recently opened a new Fine and Performing Arts Center, which has enhanced its reputation in the community and provided the opportunity for new programs and options relating to the fine and performing arts.

The primary goals of our action plan were several:

1. emphasize more pluralism in our U.S. History and our American Literature courses;

2. assign writing topics on pluralism and American identity in three Developmental Writing (EN 100) courses;

3. develop a new course in 20th century American culture
4. introduce an American Studies Option into the CCC curriculum.

Grant participant Sharon Kewish has revised her two American Literature courses to reflect the pluralism and identity themes.
EN 209 is a survey course of American literature from the colonial period through the nineteenth century (often ending with the Civil War--end of Romantic Movement). EN 210 is a survey course of American literature from the mid-nineteenth century--Age of Realism--through mid-twentieth century literature. Since the purpose of a survey course is to study those authors contributing the most significantly in the widest possible range, the focus in these courses is on the major authors of each period. In the last several years more women have been included in an attempt to compensate for their exclusion in the past.

Colonial Period:
Anne Bradstreet -- numerous poems
Mary Rowlandson -- A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson
Sarah Kemble Knight -- The Journal of Madam Knight, Literature of Reason and Revolution
Phillis Wheatley -- numerous poems
Hannah Webster Foster -- The Coquette, "Letters LXV - LXXIV" (the seduction, decline and death of Eliza Wharton).

During the period of Reason and Revolution, Ms. Kewish has included Native American voices, in actuality America's first immigrants.
Myths and Tales from the Seneca Indians, Cherokee Indians, Yakima Indians, Oglala Indians
Poems from the Pima tribes, Orations from the Iroquois and the Shawnee

Age of Romanticism
Harriet Beecher Stowe -- Uncle Tom's Cabin
Louisa May Alcott -- Hospital Sketches

Age of Realism
Emily Dickinson -- numerous poems
Mary E. Wilkins Freeman -- "A New England Nun"

Sarah Orne Jewett -- "A White Heron"
Kate Chopin -- The Awakening
Charlotte Perkins Gilman -- "The Yellow Wallpaper"

This period also includes several African-American writers as well as works written about African Americans.
Charles Waddell Chestnutt, Joel Chandler Harris

20th Century Literature
Authors include Willa Cather, Gertrude Stein, Hilda Doolittle, Marianne Moore, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Katherine Anne Porter, Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, Richard Wright, Edith Wharton, Lorraine Hansberry, and Gwendolyn Brooks. Ms Kewish is now working on the inclusion of additional Asian-American and Spanish-American writers. Since there is not enough time in each semester to discuss all of these writers, as many as possible are presented for discussion, some in more depth than others. The traditional American literature canon is greatly enhanced by these additional voices. Of the four major papers required in each American literature course, two may focus on these works.

Richard Curcio has incorporated more pluralism into his two United States History courses. He has purchased a lot of new material for the library which will contribute to the changes he has made in the syllabi. In addition, he has put together a new course in 20 century American culture, which will be taught for the first time during the spring 1997 semester as an honors course. See attachment for syllabus. Richard has also monitored a student retreat during which the themes of pluralism and identity have been discussed.

All the students in three of the developmental English classes (EN 100 03 (30 students), 04 (32 students), 06 (18 students) wrote a paragraph or an essay on a topic relating to pluralism or American identity. This was their final writing assignment before the College Basic Skills Test. We prepared for the assignment by doing lots of in-class brainstorming on possible topics--food, shopping for clothes and checking labels for where they were made, interviewing friends or co-workers from an ethnic background different than theirs, personal experiences, descriptions, and American identity. Most of them chose to write about what it means to be an American. Students love to talk about their backgrounds, and several of them were willing to share their papers with others. Some of the topics included Puerto Rican and Proud, My Guatemalan Grandmother, Interview with a Filipino Nurse, My Ethnic Heritage, Growing Up in Lebanon, What It Means to be a Turk; most students concentrated on what being American means to them and what we have in common. The ideas that kept coming up had to do with rights, equality, and

opportunities. Many mentioned that being multicultural made America what it is.

One of the major obstacles to the project is one we face frequently, and that is the lack of interest on the part of the faculty--faculty who bring a newspaper to faculty meetings or chat with their colleagues when a presenter is addressing the group, faculty who tell us they have enough to do without adding something else. We don't have a solution to this problem although it doesn't stop us and others from continuing to try.

The approval of the proposed American Studies Option remains to be done. The option will be presented to both the English/Humanities Division and the Curriculum Committee in February 1997. We do not foresee any problems with getting the option approved. The new Twentieth Century American Culture Course is already part of the spring 1997 schedule.

Students and a portion of our colleagues have been somewhat enthusiastic about the what it means to be an American topic. Some of their responses and comments are included in an attachment.

A highlight of the grant activities besides the initial conference, of course, was the campus visit of Carole Edmonds, our mentor. Besides encouraging the three of us involved in the grant, Carole gave a wonderful presentation to our faculty, our International Education/Cultural Diversity Committee, and Phi Theta Kappa. She gave us excellent ideas for incorporating pluralism and identity into the curriculum as well as the college community, including detailed information on implementing learning communities. As a result of discussions with Carole, we have already started a type of speakers series; Ms. Eva Salier, a Holocaust survivor, addressed Richard Curcio's class on December 9, and we are in the process of making arrangements with a Japanese-American woman who relocated to Cumberland County after spending some of the W.W.II years in a Japanese-American internment camp.

Overall, participation in this project has allowed us to improve and update the curriculum, encouraged us to keep the dual themes in the forefront for both students and staff, and got us started with additional activities that will contribute to the Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground conversation.

A few ideas we gathered in answer to the question "What do we as Americans have in common?"

Answers from faculty at 10/96 faculty meeting: freedom of speech, other freedoms, language--some disputes on this, Bill of Rights, opportunities, travel, respect for people with different backgrounds, love of the land, pride, political system, public schools, ability to make a living, competition, wonderful feeling returning home after a trip to another country, books we read, movies we watch, type of restaurants we frequent, willingness to work together and help each other, volunteer and charitable activities, leisure activities, being American.

Answers from students in English 100 03, 04, & 06: food, pizza, Italian food, television, MTV, religion, cars, school system, freedom, pride, education, love of sports, fast-food restaurants, way we react towards each other, fun activities, equal opportunities, community colleges, rights, clothes/fashion, courts, people of all races and backgrounds.

Danville Area Community College is located in a rural/blue collar community in east central Illinois. The college was established initially as an extension center of the University of Illinois in 1946 and became a public junior college in 1949. It has been located since 1965 in several buildings constructed at the turn of the century and acquired from the Veterans Administration. Several renovations and additional buildings have been added. Enrollment is approximately 1800 FTE credit students.

Because of its diverse economy--farming, mining, and heavy industry--the Danville area attracted European immigrants from Ireland, Germany, France, Belgium, Great Britain, Italy, Lithuania, and the Slavic countries. African Americans began to arrive in Danville from the Deep South after 1860, with heaviest immigration in the twentieth century, and African Americans now comprise 12 per cent of the population. Latinos, most of them migrant workers to Vermilion County fields and canning factories, have arrived in increasing numbers since the 1950s. Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Hmong, and peoples from the Indian subcontinent have added to the diversity of the population in the last two decades. Therefore, the Danville community still consists of a European American majority, but ethnic and racial diversity are an important part of its composition.

Danville is a typical rust belt community which has lost much of its heavy industry during the past two decades, but which

is trying to restructure its economy and prepare its work force for new technological opportunities. Through the last decades of population decline and unemployment, the community has looked more frequently towards Danville Community College for leadership in these efforts. The college has responded through a "Workforce 2000" initiative with local business and public schools for improved student preparation and through its well-regarded leadership in human relations and the humanities. The college has led community discussions through Jefferson Meetings on constitutional issues and through World Affairs Council symposia, and college faculty are frequent speakers for community organizations on all aspects of human relations and the humanities. Thirty community leaders attended the telecast "On Common Ground" in October 1996 and then discussed problems and commonalities with twenty members of the DACC faculty, staff, and students.

DACC's Action Plan, which developed from these conversations, involved students in collecting materials from members of minority communities in the Danville area, to be used for curriculum development in DACC's humanities classes and to be available to the local community as well. The project was launched through Rhetoric II classes (the research paper) team-taught with courses in Illinois history (which has a local component), Afro-American literature, and women in literature during the fall 1996 semester. Two Rhetoric II classes piloted the project in Spring 1996. The project so far has involved over seventy-five students who have gathered oral histories from community residents who identify with three minority groups: African American, Latino, and Asian. The students prepared for their interviews with a variety

of "conversations" about diversity: background research, guest speakers, and class discussions. They were also instructed in the techniques of oral history research, with particular attention to the development of sensitivities necessary for non-threatening and still effective interviewing. (The European American instructors found students and guests from minority groups very helpful in this instruction.) The project encouraged students to take charge of their own learning, since they were required to initiate contacts with interviewees, conduct interviews, make transcripts, and evaluate their experiences and information.

The quality of the resulting interviews has varied, but each interview has historical value. Some of the people interviewed were African American community leaders, who have a broad perspective and who told about their leadership in working for equality and opportunity with the community. The interviews provided information about work patterns among minorities and the important roles played by both education and military service in their survival. The interviews with Latinos and Asians were very diverse, but did uncover common themes and common challenges such as language barriers, isolation, job discrimination. Most of the interviews also focused on private lives--how individuals and families maintained their integrity while coping with prejudice and other challenges. Pride in accomplishments was common to all groups, as was a firm belief in education and an intense identification with family. The greatest challenge to students and instructors in this project was to find enough people willing to

be interviewed. Sometimes people would agree, but cancel appointments. Few attended the special night for interviews scheduled at the college, an effort to find a neutral ground for those hesitant to be interviewed at home. Some students withdrew from Rhetoric, finding the project to be more of a challenge than they could handle. Those who remained and found interviewees, however, were enriched by the opportunity. In their evaluations they stated that they had gained a new awareness of minorities, a new appreciation for community diversity, and pride in their own abilities to meet new challenges.

The climax of the fall semester project was an activity which we added to our original action plan after meeting with our mentor, Max Reichard, in Los Angeles, and with guest speakers there. Encouraged by their question: "What will the people interviewed get for their efforts?" we honored those who gave interviews with a celebration. Entitled "E Pluribus Unum," the festive event on a Tuesday evening in November featured displays of pictures and quotes from the interviews (arranged under common themes such as work, recreation, family, and education). The evening was a great success, attended by about one hundred participants. Students made their interviewees welcome and all enjoyed looking at the displays and enjoying a variety of ethnic foods and music, including a Latino band and dancing, an African drumming group, and a gospel trio.

We still need to complete corrections on the interviews collected so far (each interviewee has a chance to correct the transcript) and to establish the most effective way to make the materials accessible at college and community libraries and

museums. This will be done with learning resource professionals as our consultants. We expect liberal arts instructors to addthe materials to curricula in social science and humanities courses at DACC, so the material must be made usable for them. We are also expecting instructors to extend the project to spring 1997 courses, so will share our instructional materials and experiences with them. Also due this spring is a special, expanded issue of "Waiting for Rain," the college literary magazine, which will feature student writings and other material centered on the minority ethnic experience in the Danville area.

The display for "E Pluribus Unum" included pictures and quotations which highlight both the minority experience and the commonalities which all of us share as Americans, and we will use this material in displays for Black History Month, Women's History Month, and Latino History Month. Students and community members were impressed by the commonalities in the displayed quotes and pictures: a deep belief in the value of education, an intense identification with family, and a pride in accomplishment. A common theme, voiced by an immigrant from Korea, was that "I came to the United States looking for the 'American Dream' just like everybody else." Interviewees were forthright about the challenges of prejudice, but a Latino woman expressed another common theme about people: "To me I see them the same; no matter they're white, or green, or purple, they are human beings." We believe that our project at DACC took our community and college a few steps further towards her outlook.

FRESNO CITY COLLEGE
1101 EAST UNIVERSITY AVENUE
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93704

1. Fresno City College is located in the agriculturally rich San Joaquin Valley, geographically in the middle of the state of California. Fresno is one of the most ethnically diverse communities in the valley and state with a population of approximately three hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants that range from African American, Armenian, Asian American (Chinese, Japanese, and Southeast Asian), Basque, Latino (most Mexican), American Indian, Punjabi (Sikhs), and various Euroamericans from many ethnic backgrounds.

Established in 1911, the college is the oldest in the state (some of the buildings date back to the 1920's) providing a culturally diverse student body of approximately eighteen thousand with course offerings ranging from transfer classes to four-year institutions to a multitude of technical and vocational programs preparing them for immediate entrance into the local job market. The college's offerings are primarily for credit (about ninety percent of all classes). With a faculty of over three hundred full-time instructors and counselors, the college and its current administration have upheld a tradition of providing guidance and leadership for the community.

II. The college's Action Plan has four major objectives: (1) Establish a discipline called American Studies; (2) Engage the faculty-at-large by forming a committee on "pluralism and identity"; (3) Make changes in the overall curriculum; (4) Insure program dissemination of the activities focusing on diversity and identity on campus and in the community.

III. Thus far, all of our objectives have begun and are on-going. American Pluralism and Identity Committee (APIC) member, Richard A. Valencia, has developed a new course entitled, *"American Pluralism: the Search for Common Ground,"* and this class will be taught in the Spring Semester of 1997. This is the first step in establishing an American Studies program. At the beginning of the Fall Semester, 1996, the Social Science Division held a half-day colloquia on the subject of pluralism and its meaning.

Mr. Gerry Stokle, Division Dean and lead administrator of the project, has suggested to the campus Curriculum Committee that a statement be included encouraging all departments to consider the discussion of American Pluralism and Identity where possible as part

of any new course presented to the committee for approval.

In the spring of 1996, the Social Science Division presented a symposium entitled, "*Growing Together in the Twenty-first Century: The Search for Common Values in the Midst of Our Diversity.*" The activities included an essay contest addressing the topics of pluralism and diversity in our society, a panel discussion by fourteen students representing the various ethnic groups who attend Fresno City College, and a celebration of multiculturalism. This was a very successful program for both students and the community-at-large (this endeavor was the collaboration of Fresno State University, the Fresno Center for Non-violence, and Centro de la Familia in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Humanities project on pluralism and identity).

In an attempt to integrate the discussion of identity and pluralism, the college's Honors' colloquia included several "conversations" on the meaning of diversity, ethnic identity, and commonalities of American culture (to the extent if one exists).

All of the activities are part of the college's commitment to promote the discussion and value of pluralism and identity in the

classroom and in the community. Notwithstanding, these efforts are all in their incipient stages.

IV. The efforts of the APIC have been supported at all levels of the college from students to the Office of the President. No real obstacles have been encountered in terms of a reticence or intransigence on any one's part. The major difficulty will be to establish American Studies as a viable program on campus. This will take the cooperation of many faculty and the logistics may prove to be the most difficult barrier to overcome. However, the committee is enthusiastic and confident that the Action Plan will be completed.

If anything has elicited the most discussion, it would be the very definition of pluralism and the identification of a "common identity" for this society. In group discussions with faculty, students, and community people, what has been the most comment has been the issues that divide this country rather than unite it.

V. At this juncture, the APIC has started all of its goals as stated in the action plan. Another class focusing on pluralism will be developed by faculty in the Humanities Division. The committee is attempting to obtain the services of a nationally-known speaker to make the key

address at an in-service day in the spring to initiate further discussions on pluralism and identity. The college is planning a major celebration of diversity for the spring, and the administration has allocated several thousand dollars for the event. The APIC will work with faculty to integrate sections of courses such as American Literature, American History, and Ethnic Studies into the new American Studies program. Members of the APIC are going to make a presentation to the Board of Trustees in February, 1997 to introduce formally the activities of the APIC and the college on the projects undertaken to promote diversity and pluralism.

VI. As previously stated, one of the more perplexing issues is to attempt to define the concept of pluralism. The term "American" is loaded with an emotional flavor that is difficult to "dilute" when applied to different groups. What is evident is that the term refers more to an ideal than a reality. In attempting to "deconstruct" extant definitions of cultural pluralism and the "melting pot," students and faculty have struggled with any common definition of who we are and what that is supposed to represent. Some of the faculty have suggested that what we are confronting is more the

question of a personal identity that anything else. Students find that the whole concept of a national identity as confusing and ambiguous. They often refer to ideational constructs of Americanism. Some of the more salient comments is that we, as a nation, are more divided by social class more than race, ethnicity, or gender. Notwithstanding, the latter characteristics complicate the vision of what may unite us. In exploring the issue of common ground, the one committee member believed that it was *the hope* of what the United States represents that is the common experience of many Americans. What is abundantly clear is that pluralism, diversity, and multiculturalism are concepts as well as forces that need to be better understood in order for us to prepare our students for the twenty-first century.

HAGERSTOWN
JUNIOR
COLLEGE

11400 Robinwood Drive • Hagerstown, Maryland 21742-6590 • (301) 790-2800 • Voice-TDD

Introduction

Hagerstown Junior College is located two and one half miles from downtown Hagerstown, Maryland in Washington County. The campus is located on a semi-rural 187 acre site which is easily accessible from interstates 81 and 70. The college is located 70 miles to the west of Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, D.C and is included in the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Area. The college attracts students from nearby Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Virginia. Each semester there are approximately 3,000 credit students. Approximately 1100 are full time and 1900 are part time. The average age is 28. In addition to the credit program the college serves 7000 non-credit students through its continuing education programs.

Primary goal of project

The primary goals of the action plan were to provide a series of faculty development activities to provide the background and foundation for infusing the curriculum with common threads that bind diverse communities within the American experience.

Accomplishments

In May the team organized a colloquium entitled "Who are We in the Western Maryland region"? The panel represented the Mennonite, Pennsylvania Dutch, and African American communities. This event was well attended by the faculty and served to highlight not only some of the major cultural attributes of these communities, but also reminded the audience of the many common threads running through the cultural experience of the local region. In August we continued with a second faculty colloquium which focused on HJC faculty who spoke about their heritages from India, Iran, and Greece. Each of the speakers responded to a provided series of questions which

focused on how their cultures compare and contrast to American society. Each speaker gave a brief demographic description of their native land and then proceeded to comment on family structure and values, ways of dress, educational expectations, economic conditions, national and religious holidays, and stereotypes by and about Americans. Each presenter brought a collection of cultural artifacts which added a visual dimension of cultural enrichment. Even though most faculty see each other frequently during the year there is seldom the opportunity for an exchange of in-depth formal discussion of personal and cultural experiences. The faculty was especially interested in the various educational systems and the place of women in other countries. The colloquium was an excellent format to illustrate the diversities in our midst while sharing our common experiences. Immigrants to this country have learned that while there are vast differences between their two cultures, there are great similarities.

During the fall semester we sponsored three "lunch and learn" activities from 11:30 to 1:00 during our Thursday meeting time. Each of the three programs explored different facets of culture. The first "lunch and learn" panel featured three students-- A Native American, a Ukranian, and an immigrant from the Dominican Republic. Each spoke about native customs, activities, and routines and commented on how their lives have changed through the American acculturation process. The Navajo student was especially articulate about her two societies and marveled at the insight she gained about one through her experiences with the other. After she lived in her "Other Society" (American society), she said that she was especially impressed with the sophistication of her native language and the wisdom of her elders.

The second "lunch and learn" activity featured speakers from three different religions. This panel did an exceptionally good job in articulating the commonalities and divisions that religion can bring to culture. An Episcopal priest, a Jewish rabbi, and a follower of a Hindu guru spoke about the basic tenets of their faiths, the uniqueness of their convictions, and their qualified statements about "the

many trails to the top of the same mountain". The success of this particular program was enhanced by the particular combination of personalities on the panel. Each of them had a deep respect for the others. The panel shared two basic assumptions: (1) that we look to tradition to find truths that are not scientifically provable, and (2) there are transcendent truths, i.e., good and bad do exist in the world. In different ways the presenters expressed the thought that religion is meant to be a positive force. Several of the attendees commented that the presentation had caused them to think differently about themselves and others in a way that is more inclusionary.

The third "lunch and learn" activity was a presentation of ethnic expressions in music by an Irish American and an Iranian American. The listeners found the Irish harp to be very relaxing and the commentary between selections to be quite informative. Music is not simply a form of entertainment; it reflects and molds society's values. The harp, for instance, was used as a political instrument. In their songs harpers criticized the British crown and as a result the Celtic harp was virtually destroyed. Only four survive from the early period. Early Celtic harp music has been lost, so harp music today has its roots in Europe, especially Italy. Many familiar musical selections today can be traced through a long history created by harpers several centuries ago. Harp music has strong ties to our Appalachian roots which are mainly Scotch-Irish. Harp music also has associations with New Age music.

The santur (Persian dulcimer) provided an interesting contrast to the harp. The music selected was classical Persian music. Eastern music often sounds out of tune to Westerners because Western music is based on 12 different pitches, each one one-half-step apart. Eastern music, the artist explained, is based on more than 12 different pitches, with combinations of quarter steps and three-quarter steps. The dulcimer varies in shape and size and is found in many different cultures. The Persian dulcimer differs from the American (mountain dulcimer), Greek dulcimer and others in its construction. While the Persian dulcimer has movable bridges, the others have stationary ones.

Obstacles

The basic problems surrounding the implementation of new courses and programs or major curricular changes in existing programs are related to financial resources. On a small campus such as HJC there are diminishing resources with increased demands on staff who have limited time to develop new courses.

Remaining task

At this writing five of the six programs have taken place. The sixth is scheduled for January 9,1997. Ideas for curriculum infusion will be advanced at that time. Through the facility of variable credit seminar faculty quickly can arrange 1-3 credit courses in subject areas not presently addressed in the curriculum. For example unity and diversity could be addressed under such topics "women in society", "ethnicity in the region", or "non Christian religious values". A second approach might be to design a new interdisciplinary course focusing on major issues such as justice, family values, or social priorities. The third proposal would explore the process of infusing cultural awareness projects into service learning options which are being developed at the college. Included in the project would be reports on their experiences and understanding of justice, discrimination, and "civil society", etc.

Responses of colleagues and students

Conversations in classrooms, faculty offices, and hallways cannot be summarized in a unilateral convergence. Our programs which focused on family values, religious commonalities, and cultural traditions have shown us that there are many answers to life's challenges, predicaments, and questions as they are played out in different parts of the world and in different segments of American society. We are brought together by the tenacious belief that in America, despite our history of examples of extraordinary injustice, discrimination, and individualism that eventually there will be equal opportunity. In our class discussions we realize that the universals of culture derive from the fact that all societies must perform the same essential functions if they are to survive. In meeting these prerequisites for group life, people inevitably design similar, though not identical, patterns for

living. As Clyde Kluckhohn wrote, "All cultures constitute somewhat distinct answers to essentially the same questions posed by human biology and by the generalities of the human situation." It is our challenge to find ways for these distinct answers to be acceptable to all. Meanwhile we know that still there is division, and there is ethnocentrism. Our discussions also concluded that racial division in American society may be getting wider. One of our faculty wrote an article for the local newspaper "Is It Class or Race That Most Shapes Our Values". He concludes his article by saying:

> Ideally speaking, it is hoped that a liberal arts education in conjunction with any occupational skills will make it possible for each citizen to remove the binders of race and class origin and work for the long term well being of the whole community.

Our conversations are resting for now on the thought that basic repairs are required in our society. We are concerned that "the civil society" (discussed in From Me To We) is collapsing. The fulfillment of a democratic system is dependent on the government, private sector, and the "civil society". The challenge to reinvigorate our civil society is also the challenge to reinvigorate a family structure which will institute and reinforce humanitarian and egalitarian values which mature through a liberal arts education.

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EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES: IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

Progress Report

Harrisburg Area Community College, established February 14, 1964, was the first community college in Pennsylvania. The college is a multi-campus college that offers programs and courses at three campuses: the Wildwood Campus in Harrisburg, the Lancaster Campus, and the Lebanon Campus. Courses are also offered at the Gettysburg Center and additional locations throughout southcentral Pennsylvania. The college with its three campuses is located in southcentral Pennsylvania. The college has 10,719 credit students (Fall, 1996) and 17,749 students in non-credit programs (Fall, 1995). The multi-campus college serves an area that includes Cumberland, Dauphin, Perry, Lancaster, Lebanon, York and Adams counties. The population total from these counties should come close to one million people. Harrisburg Area Community College is well known throughout the area for low cost quality education.

The college is "dedicated to delivering superior educational value characterized by learning-centered teaching and continuous instructional enhancement and innovation in our multi-campus environment that is accessible, affordable, and well maintained." (College Catalog) The college recently received a national award for its diversity initiatives.

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The college serves a diverse student population.

ACTION PLAN PRIMARY GOALS

The two year project is to bring English teachers together for meetings every three weeks during the regular semesters. The goal is to discuss the writings of African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, women and others. The emphasis is to be on what holds Americans together. Seminar speakers and readings will focus on content literature. The attention will be more on what is being read, rather than arguments for diversity. At least two content speakers or formal videoconferences are to be planned for each year. The meetings will function to clarify the goals and the direction of the English 101-102 sequence, bring adjunct and full-time faculty together, and enhance faculty understanding of diverse literatures. A multi-cultural text is to be selected for adjunct English 101 teachers for Fall, 1996. Appropriate meetings with Campus leaders in Diversity Initiatives were planned. Course outlines and syllabi were reviewed and appropriate changes are to be made. The primary goal is to enhance and improve instruction through discussions on American pluralism and identity.

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. A multi-cultural reader was selected for adjunct English 101 Instructors.
2. Discussion meetings were set up for Fall, 1996. From 10-15 adjunct and full-time faculty met. About three meetings were held.
3. A videoconference was held in November on African Americans and the Publishing world, sponsored by the college president.
4. Grant activities were published in the Grants Newsletter as well as the campus newsletter.
5. Reports were made to Director of Institutional Diversity, the Institutional Diversity Task Force, and the Communications and the Arts Division.
6. Dr. Kathy Fedorko, mentor visited the college on October 2 from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. She met with the Director of Institutional Diversity, Chair of the College Task Force on Diversity, Dean of the C&A Division, and an adjunct instructor of English. She also attended the second meeting in our series of conversations on pluralism.
7. A novel was selected . Spring, 1997 meetings. Lakota Woman , a national best seller by Mary Crow Dog.
8. The group discussed the article "I Am The Canon: Finding

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Ourselves in Multiculturalism," by Patrick Shannon. In our discussions we discussed different assignments. We discussed student reactions and student learning. Our discussion went very well. Each participant was enthusiastic about discussing the material. Student response for the most part was favorable. The project had a very successful beginning. We worked on every item in our action plan.

OBSTACLES

Obstacles have been very few. The only one I can think of was the novel Jasmine which we originally planned to read was out of print. We can always use more time. The meetings were held at 3 in the afternoon. Those who attended enjoyed the discussion even though some meetings lasted beyond 4:30. Since diversity is a college goal, there is much support throughout the college community from the president's office on down.

REMAINING WORK

We still need to continue our conversations, plan for a seminar leader or videoconference, discuss Lakota Woman, discuss assignments, consider publishing student essays and assignments, consider offering an adjunct teacher release time oversee the project in the future, and continue to report progress to appropriate campus bodies.

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REACTIONS

The conversations on: What does it mean to be an American ? What divides us ? What brings us together ? What do we have in common ? among students and colleagues were lively and yet serious. The discussions were engaging and intellectually stimulating. Eyes were opened to the different struggles and dreams of a diverse people. Students were able to see others and their struggles. I beleive that the college community is made stronger because we are able to see how much is held in common with others from differing backgrounds. The conversations allow us to feel a sense of pride and respect for the experiences of others. It makes compassion and empathy possible. Those with privilege and those without privilege will not always come together, but breaking the silence and discussing the issues that seem to separate us often works to bring us together. The dialog has been fruitful and must continue.

HAROLD
WASHINGTON
COLLEGE

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PROGRESS REPORT

James Heard
Michael Ruggeri
Christine Franz

Harold Washington College is a community college located in the heart of the city of Chicago. Its location in the central business district and at the center of the area transportation network allows the college to draw its student population from all of the communities that make up this great urban metropolis on Lake Michigan.

The student population reflects the diversity of the city, country, and the world. The on-campus student body of approximately 8000 is supplemented by students on various off-campus sites as close as city hall and as far away as Saudi Arabia. The ethnic diversity of the college demonstrates the wide geographical area from which the college draws its student population. Although no ethnic group has a majority, African-American students are the most numerous, followed by Hispanic-American and European-American students, and increasing numbers of Asian-American students. It is important to note that within these groups there is much geographic diversity and that the college has a significant foreign student population.

As one views this population, it is easy to conclude that Harold Washington College is a college that can be defined as a reflection of the communities it serves.

The primary goal of our Action Plan was to explore the common ground which exists in the historical experiences of African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans. By matching an African-American history class and a Latin American history class and requiring all students to read certain common materials and participate in certain common experiences (in addition to the requirements of each course), we hoped that students would see the commonality as they study the uniqueness of the historical experiences of each group.

By drawing upon the entire college community for both support and resources, we hoped to encourage movements toward common ground throughout our college.

We accomplished more than 98% of our Action Plan; that is, the Team with the active support of the President of our college, Nancy DeSombre, and the entire Harold Washington College Community:

1. concurrently scheduled an African-American class and a Latin American class
2. determined dates and rooms for joint activities
3. formulated a budget
4. wrote an article for fall course schedule
5. wrote announcement and solicitation to faculty
6. contacted museums and theaters
7. explored and selected common themes
8. reported to the Board of Trustees
9. recruited students
10. met during the summer to finalize activities and materials
11. identified date for mentor (Carmen Salazar) visit
12. prepared agenda for mentor's visit
13. assigned common materials to both classes
14. participated in eight joint activities
15. evaluated project
16. decided to continue project into the spring semester

The joint sessions went especially well. We required invited speakers to dialogue with each other and the students. Students and those of the college community who attended these open sessions agreed that these sessions were enlightening and exciting. Students from both classes requested more opportunities for joint meetings to explore common past and present experiences. Students also expressed a desire for more one-on-one dialogues in order to explore common experiences. These sessions and interactive journal assignments allowed us to successfully use "conversation" as a classroom activity to address the issues of American pluralism and identity.

The result of these conversational experiences have led to the following conclusions:

1. An "American" is anyone whose ancestral or present historical experiences have been transformed by and has transformed American history and culture. One is always becoming an American.

2. Americans continue to be divided by ignorance of our common historical experiences, our common present and our common destiny.

3. Only education, common experiences and fear of common destruction seem to bring Americans together. The alternative is continuous civil and uncivil wars.

4. Americans need to realize (before it is too late) that we share a common human history that intersects more often than we are aware of or want to acknowledge. Conversations among Americans will end this tendency toward destructive individualism.

The obstacles have been and continue to be:

1. Logistics—moving students throughout the city within the time constraints of students' class and work schedules

2. Time—very difficult to carry out the Action Plan, evaluate and submit timely reports on that plan, and carry on our teaching and administrative duties within a single semester

The following remains to be done:

1. report to the college community on the success and future of this project
2. attend National Conference on American Pluralism and Identity
3. plan to include an Asian-American component to the project
4. address the issues of logistics, time, and conversations among students

HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

From Fragments to the Whole: Integrating Diversity and Unity in the Academic Foundations Program at Hudson County Community College

Progress Report

1. Located in Jersey City and West New York, New Jersey, and established in 1974, Hudson County Community College enrolls a richly diverse student body(48% Hispanic, 19% African-American, 16% White, 12% Asian, 5% other). Hudson County is an urban community college located in a center of immigration, so its students are both newly arrived in America and long-time residents. HCCC offers 21 degree programs enrolling approximately 4,000 students in a variety of terminal and transfer degrees. An additional 2,000 students a year take continuing education courses at HCCC.

2. HCCC's Action Plan focuses on students in developmental Basic English I and II courses. Many of our entering students - both native-born Americans and immigrants - place in developmental courses in reading, writing and mathematics. The primary goal of the team's project is to provide reading materials and writing assignments that will help these students develop college-level skills while reinforcing their knowledge of American culture. Specific objectives are to develop a course anthology of readings on eight specific topics such as Colonial America, Slavery and the Civil War, The New Immigration, and the Frontier in America. Also

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included in the plan is the development of an oral history project and presentation of faculty development workshops.

3. Much progress has been made in the collection of materials for the developmental English course anthology. Both full-length texts and shorter articles and chapters suitable for developmental students have been selected and some have been field-tested in the classroom. For example, Professor Rosie Soy's Basic English II course featured various readings focusing on the issues of American identity as seen through the eyes of Americans of different ethnicities in Elizabeth Wong's short story, "The Struggle to Be An All-American Girl," Deairich Hunter's story of an African American teenager's high school life in Brooklyn, New York in "Ducks vs. Hard Rocks" and two novels by immigrants - Anzia Yezierska's Bread Givers and Esmeralda Santiago's When I Was Puerto Rican. Barry Tomkins' class also studied Anzia Yezierska's Bread Givers as an example of the immigrant experience in the United States, especially the conflict in values between the younger "Americanizing" generation and those of the "old country," a conflict well known to many of our students.

Professor Jani Decena-White piloted the Oral History component of the project in her Basic English II class. Students evolved methods and tools for interviewing, using team member Barry Tomkins, himself an immigrant, as a willing subject. Students worked in collaborative groups to determine what questions to ask, revising and writing up the interview and also doing a follow-up interview. The project focuses on the subject's own personal history as it relates to the question of American identity.

Three team members also gave Faculty Development Workshops: Rosie Soy on "Integrating Asian-American Literature into the Curriculum"; George Satterfield on "Social History Documents Across the Humanities" and Jani Decena-White on "Our Story," the oral history project.

4. There have been no obstacles in implementing the Action Plan. Professor Charles Errico, the team mentor, gave excellent advice, and the faculty and administration at HCCC have been very supportive. However, as the project is broad in scope, it will take some time before the complete curriculum package is available for faculty members at HCCC though various components will be implemented as they become available.

5. Copyrights need to be researched on some materials and a course management package needs to be designed.

6. The responses of students and colleagues to the questions following have been varied:

* What does it mean to be an American?

Although there is consensus that an American identity exists, ideas about how it is constituted are often vague. In Rosie Soy's class, most responded that an American means someone usually born in this country or naturalized if an immigrant. A number of people of color pointed out conflicts between their own view of themselves as American and their rejection as Americans by other members of American society. Interestingly, writing on the

topic "Should English be the required language in the workplace?" many students approved of an English-only rule despite their own second-language background.

*** What divides us?**

This question brought many responses related to cultural difference such as prejudice and discrimination, intolerance, resentment against immigrants, cultural and racial hatreds and fears, and stereotyping.

*** What brings us together?**

Responses included the desire to provide a better life for oneself and a better education for one's children, and being sensitive and appreciative of other cultures and heritages while admiring and celebrating American values such as civil liberty.

*** What do we have in common?**

This yielded answers similar to those in response to "What brings us together?" Many students and colleagues pointed out that the notion of an American identity related not to commonality of background or experience, but to what Americans share across boundaries of gender, race and ethnicity, a core of values tied to democracy and personal freedom.

George Satterfield
Rosie Soy
Barry Tomkins
Jani Decena-White

Indian Hills
community college

PROGRESS REPORT OUTLINE

Established in 1966 when Centerville Junior College and Iowa Technical College merged, Indian Hills Community College is located in rural Southeastern Iowa. The two-year college serves a generally culturally homogeneous ten-county district and features two campuses. The main campus is located in Ottumwa. This campus offers classes to approximately 3000 students, half of which are enrolled in transfer courses. The college is also embarking on an ambitious outreach program which will put Extension Centers in each of the eight remaining district counties. These Extension Centers will be able to offer in-house courses as well as courses offered over the state's groundbreaking Iowa Communications Network's (ICN) fiber-optics educational transmission system. As a part of the ICN, Indian Hills is able to broadcast any of its classes live to any other college or high school in the state.

Indian Hills Community College's **Exploring America's Communities: In Search of Common Ground's** Action Plan was initially three-fold. The first part of it called for the introduction of a course (or, perhaps, a series of courses) which would address current issues of cultural pluralism and identity. The second part necessitated workshops designed to acquaint the faculty with such issues and sensitize them to the implementation of the issues in their classes, no

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matter the discipline area. The final thrust was to organize a "Cultural Fair, " which would bring expert lecturers, artists and crafts people to the college for students and community members to experience and appreciate. Our plan was to be annually thematic with Native American culture being the first highlighted.

We are happy to report that we have completed each of these goals and have added more! We have instituted a new course, Native American Studies, which we are currently teaching; we created a workshop entitled "Incorporating Native American Materials into the Classroom, " which was offered not only to our college instructors but to the area K-12 teachers as well. And we have made arrangements for Native American performers and artists to be on our Ottumwa campus April 12, 1997, for our first annual Cultural Fair. In addition, we have substantially developed our library's Native American collection, we undertook in July a week-long student trip to South Dakota, camping on the Oglala Lakota Pine Ridge Reservation, and we have begun to put together a video which details Native American history and culture in southeastern Iowa. This will be distributed to all schools and libraries in the area when it is finished and will be available, free of charge, to any service group or individual who wishes to show it.

While we still have more goals to accomplish, we have had several major successes as a result of this project. The trip to the Oglala Lakota Reservation in Pine Ridge, South Dakota kicked off our project, and was an extremely worthwhile experience. This kind of direct experience with the culture certainly made a lasting impression on the students and faculty who attended. We also

received some very positive publicity about the project as a result of this trip. Another major accomplishment has been the enthusiastic participation of so many faculty members in the project. Many instructors from a variety of disciplines have modified their existing course content to include attention to Native American issues. Consequently, students have encountered the issue from a variety of perspectives. We firmly believe that the level of awareness concerning this issue is much higher now as a result of this project. The new course in Native American Studies has also been popular with the students. Because of this multi-discipline approach, there were many "conversations" occurring both in and out of the classroom concerning Native American issues. The general issue of American pluralism and identity has become the focus of most of our College Communication classes as well. With the adoption of a new text, Common Ground, students read several essays by authors from a variety of cultural backgrounds concerning American pluralism and cultural identity. Students discussed the issues raised in the readings, and all of their essays focused on some aspect of cultural pluralism and identity. Through these oral and written conversations, students explored their own identities and, we believe, developed a more empathetic understanding for the difficulties of various cultural and ethnic groups in our pluralistic society.

Because of the additional work that our project required of the Arts and Sciences teachers at Indian Hills Community College, our committee anticipated problems "selling" our proposal to our members. This concern proved false as the faculty readily accepted the challenge and the extra work that went with it.

However, discussions with professors and students indicated two major concerns. The first was securing necessary materials and the second was to ensure these materials be available to the students.

Instructors who incorporated Native American issues into their classes at the beginning of the fall term were initially limited in the sources available for student and faculty use. Sources on Native Americans were both limited and outdated. This problem was greatly alleviated by the end of the term as the library had added 99 new titles and have 54 additional titles on order. In addition, the library has subscribed to a newspaper and two periodicals that deal exclusively with Native American issues. These additions to our library represent a substantial commitment of Indian Hills Community College to our project as we were denied two grants that were to have helped finance these additions to our library.

These additions to our library, as substantial as they may be, have not resolved the concerns of every faculty member. The Psychology department claims that research concerning Native Americans in that field appears to be very limited. An English professor expressed pleasure with the new additions to the library but felt that in some areas there was a greater need for balance. Native American views were readily available, but opposing views may be lacking.

The second problem, having enough material available for students, reflects a willingness of both faculty and students to cooperate in our project. The number of instructors requiring projects and/or papers led to a "rush" on

available resources. In response to concerns of both faculty and students, two changes were initiated during the fall term. It is anticipated that these two changes, as well as any future remedies that may be proposed, will be continued through the school year.

Our first change was to recognize certain texts as essential to a large number of students and to place these texts on the reserve shelf. Our second change was to place greater restrictions on the time that books dealing with Native Americans can be checked out. It is hoped that these solutions will allow all students greater access to these resources as more instructors incorporate the Native American experience into their courses.

A main concern is to seek help in financing our project both to alleviate the financial burden placed upon Indian Hills Community College and to expand the scope of the project. We are waiting to hear from one grant application and are preparing to apply for another. While awaiting to resolve these financial concerns, we are in the process of dealing with two areas of our project yet to be completed.

1. Spring Cultural Festival (Native Americans)

   This is in the final stages of planning. A tentative agenda, meeting areas, and participants have been arranged.

2. Recognize and Incorporate Other Racial/Ethnic Groups

   No work has been done on this to date. This concern does need to be addressed soon enough to prepare and make arrangements for necessary additions to our library.

As previously stated, our faculty has embraced this project enthusiastically. Most believe that the issues involved in this project need to be addressed, and this project has provided the needed "push" to get them started. It has been gratifying to see how excited our colleagues have been about this project. Our vocal music instructor even composed special music featuring Native American poetry for the fall choral concert. But our primary focus and concern is with students' attitudes toward the questions inherent in this project. We believe that students are addressing what it means to be an American in several classes. For instance, in American Literature classes, students read Crevecoeur's essay "What is an American?" in conjunction with an article of the same title written by Jerry Adler in 1995. Student discussion of the issues raised by both essays was quite animated. In College Communications I, the discussion concerning questions of what divides us has been quite interesting. Some students discovered that they harbored prejudices that they didn't know they had. Several students discussed incidents that they had experienced that made them feel "divided" from the rest of their community. Some of the most interesting responses were those in which students saw some of their own feelings reflected in the lives of people who were, on the surface, quite different from themselves. Several students saw that the concerns, ambitions, and fears voiced by people from many different backgrounds are really quite similar to their own. While it is difficult to measure changes in attitudes, the conversations about these vital issues have certainly made our students address issues they may not have considered before.

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FINAL REPORT

EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES: IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

IOWA CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Iowa Central Community College is located in rural northwest Iowa. Established in 1968 the college serves a nine-county area through its four centers and an interactive telecommunication system. This area of Iowa lacks in diversity as the majority of its residents are English-speaking of Northern European descent. However, in recent years the population has been changing with an influx of Asian and Hispanic immigrants to Fort Dodge and Storm Lake. The African-American population is approximately 3% in Fort Dodge and less than 1% in the total area. The college student population of 2,500 is somewhat more diverse with international students from 11 countries and numerous African-American students from other parts of the United States.

In the past there has been little interest in broadening the curriculum to include greater

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diversity because there has been relatively little diversity in the faculty and staff of the college and in the geographical area the college serves. However, many faculty members have begun to sense the need to introduce students to the broader world of diverse thinking brought on through cultural differences. This concern became even more evident and worrisome after some groups of students and faculty had the opportunity to participate in the national teleconference EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES on October 10, 1995. Discussion following the teleconference pointed the students' shallow understanding of who we are, our differences and our commonalities. It was clear that traditional American history and American literature courses taught in the area high schools and at the community college had not been effective in exploring American pluralism.

For this reason the basic focus of the college's Action Plan was to develop a course that will integrate American history and American literature, emphasizing the quest for common ground and what it means to be an American among the plethora of American voices. Students enrolled in this course will also have the opportunity to experience American pluralism and identity through community

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volunteerism. This latter experience will be an important part to building common ground among diverse populations. As an introductory humanities course it will be discussion-based and team taught, and, will involve a variety of teaching techniques to attract a broad range of students. American pluralism and identity will be examined through a study of the intertwining of history, literature, music, art, film and dance. The cornerstone text for exploration of American values and the common defining vision of America will be the "Declaration of Independence." Students will first define their own vision of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and then examine interpretations according to literary and historical voices within the ethnic groups. An important thesis which the course will address is that the "Declaration" expresses an ideal that has not been realized for many Americans and that it is the struggle to achieve this ideal that binds us together as Americans.

At this point in time the Plan of Action has successfully followed its timetable. The course is slated to be taught for the first time in the fall semester, 1997. The sequential steps in the planning, development and acceptance of the course

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AREA V

went very smoothly. This was due to the effort made by team members to introduce a broad range of faculty members, department heads and administration to the project. During the fall staff development days in late August our mentor Elizabeth Brown-Guillory spent the day meeting with these groups. In addition Brown-Guillory was the principal presenter for an afternoon workshop entitled FINDING COMMON GROUND IN THE CLASSROOM. About thirty faculty members and six community members attended the workshop which was held off-campus in a local meeting room. The program included an All American lunch, music from the diverse groups which make up the state of Iowa, a small group activity on diversity in the classroom, and a literary presentation by Brown-Guillory during which she incorporated a variety of short literary excerpts into the whole discussion of common ground. Participants, other than those from the college, included individuals representing various community agencies dealing with diversity. At this same time the Human Rights Director for Fort Dodge was beginning a city-wide diversity council. Several members from the college including two of the team members have since become members of the council. It is through this effort that the team hopes to expand to the second level

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of the Plan of Action. That is, the development of an outreach program to our nine-county area similar to Performers on the Prairie, our artists series, and Focus International, the semester-long international program celebrated each spring at Iowa Central Community College. Part of the outreach program is in place for the fall of 1997. Simon Estes, a well-known African American baritone who has Iowa roots, will perform with the Iowa Central Choral Group in October. During the day preceding the performance he will give master classes for vocal music students. This will be followed with other programs highlighting ethnicity.

The Plan of Action as such has met with very few obstacles. The faculty, department chairs and administration in general have been extremely supportive. The division which has been least involved has been the area of Enrollment Management. The team has attempted to involve the support staff from that division but timing has not been right. Probably the greatest obstacle has been the lack of release time for the team members. All have the maximum load of classes as well as other duties within the institution. Our mentor Brown-Guillory was somewhat overwhelmed by our

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schedules and made note of this to the vice president of instruction and to the foundation/grants officer. This is definitely a concern the institution needs to review if there is a sincere interest in grant writing and other activities involving indepth projects.

Even though time spent on the project has been our own the team has a keen desire to go beyond our small beginning. We see the need to have in-service training in diversity for all employees of Iowa Central Community College. In addition to this training the faculty would have the opportunity to participate in special staff development seminars on inclusion of topics on American pluralism and identity into their specific discipline. In the past we have found the faculty more likely to integrate special topics into the curriculum if they identify with the need. In order to expand to an outreach program for the nine-county area as well as to train the employees of the college funding must be secured. The team finds that its next mission is to locate funding sources and write the necessary grant proposals.

This project, though in its infancy, has brought changes to the college. Students and staff are

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more aware of American pluralism. Finding common ground is a goal which has yet to be addressed. The institution is grateful to the AACC/NEH for the opportunity to participate in this project.

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Dean of Academic Instruction

Itawamba
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Established in 1948, Itawamba Community College is a comprehensive two-year public institution serving students in five counties including Chickasaw, Itawamba, Lee, Monroe, and Pontotoc in rural Northeast Mississippi. The main campus is located in Fulton, Mississippi, with the vocational and technical complex in the nearby city of Tupelo, Mississippi approximately twenty miles from the main campus. The 1996 Itawamba enrollment includes 3493 credit and 3417 non-credit students.

The College subscribes to the philosophy that the mission of the community college is to bring the concept of "educational opportunities for all" closer to reality. Its goal is to provide educational opportunities of the highest quality through academic, vocational-technical, and personal enrichment programs. Students have an opportunity to pursue a two-year college parallel Associate of Arts degree, a two-year technical Associate of Applied science degree, or an Occupational Vocational certificate. The College is accredited by the Mississippi Association of Community-Junior colleges and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The primary goals of Itawamba Community College's Action Plan to enhance teaching and learning about American pluralism and identity include acquiring of video and print materials, implementing curricular changes in American Literature, American History, and Honors, and establishing a Multicultural Speakers Forum. The Team has made steady progress in accomplishing these goals. Our library is brimming with new

video and print acquisitions detailing the American Indian, Afro-American, and Latino experience in the United States. In addition, revised curricula in ENG 2223--American Literature I--and HUM 1913--Honors Seminar I--were piloted first semester.

Students in ENG 2223 began the semester by responding to the four questions--What does it mean to be an American? What divides us? What brings us together? What do we have in common?--on a personal level. Throughout the semester they applied the four questions to the works of twenty-five authors from the Colonial, Revolutionary, and Renaissance Periods. Finally, at the end of the semester, students combined their own thoughts on American pluralism and identity with those of the acknowledged masters of American Literature they had read and discussed. This course will be offered state-wide on the Mississippi Community College Network second semester.

Curricular changes in Honors Seminar I arose from the choice of the study topic--Native Americans. Students began the semester by viewing and discussing videos which presented both romantic and realistic portraits of American Indians. As the focus narrowed, students learned more about the Indians of the Southeast--especially the tribes of Mississippi--through videos, reading, and guest speakers. The semester ended with the study of Leslie Marmon Silko's CEREMONY, a contemporary American Indian classic. Honors Seminar II (HUM 1913) will explore the Afro-American culture.

Itawamba Community College's Project mentor, Dr. David Trask, kicked off our Multicultural Speakers Forum during his site visit October 2, 1996, by addressing the four questions from a national perspective. Dr. Trask also met with four of the five other

speakers in the Forum--Mrs. Patrialia Greenwood Cox, representing the American Indian culture; Judge Barry Ford, representing the Afro-American culture; Ms. Josephine Rayborn, representing the Mexican-American culture; and, Mr. Robert Ring, representing the Asian-American culture. The other Forum speaker, Dr. William Ferris from the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at The University of Mississippi, will provide the Southern perspective during his presentation scheduled for Tuesday, January 21, 1997, at 7:00 p.m. The other four presentations will follow during the Spring 1997 and the Fall 1997 semesters.

Following the retirement of Itawamba Community College's longtime American History instructor, Mr. Bill Mattison was chosen to revise the American History I curriculum and pilot it during the Spring 1997 semester. Consequently, Mr. Mattison has spent first semester acquiring material and restructuring the course to include the four questions.

Although accomplishing our goals has been tiring and time-consuming at times, the Team has not encountered any specific obstacles or special problems. We have essentially done, or are in the process of doing, everything we said we would do. Both print and videos materials have been purchased and put in place, curricula for American Literature, American History, and Honors Seminar I and II have been revamped. The Multicultural Speakers Forum is well underway.

Student response to the four questions has been particularly gratifying. Students who attended Dr. Trask's address in October entered into an enthusiastic dialogue which lasted late into the evening. The written responses from the American Literature class indicated

thoughtful reflection as well as a true appreciation for American pluralism and identity. Consider one young man's impassioned responses to this question--What brings us together?

> There have always been seeds of division in society and it is extremely unlikely that the scars of more than 200 years of strife will heal overnight. But while this may sound as though there is no hope for a united America, there is. What brings us together? It sometimes takes a catastrophic event. A hurricane. A flood. A wildfire. A disease. A war. A death. It seems that any time an event that touches human emotions occurs, the people of America have the ability to look past the divisions we face and, or a moment, dwell totally on joining together to support a common goal. When the baby fell down a well in Texas, it didn't matter what color she was or if her parents were members of a certain church or social status. What mattered to every single person in the country was the welfare of a child who had the potential to become a productive member of society. When the space shuttle exploded 73 second into flight on the morning of January

28, 1986, it didn't matter to John or Jane Q. Public that one of the astronauts who perished had an Asian background. What mattered was that seven individuals had given their lives for the nation. They set out on a mission of space exploration. What they did was complete a successfu! mission of uniting the citizens of this country in grieving the loss the families of those astronauts suffered.

Submitted by Dr. Betty Montgomery on December 16, 1996.

Kirkwood
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES:

IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

Our Institution

Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, came into existence as part of community college legislation enacted in 1965 by the state legislature. This legislation mandated that we provide comprehensive service to our community including the first two years of college coursework, vocational-technical training, job training/retraining, high school completion, and continuing education opportunities.

We are the fifth largest higher education institution in the state of Iowa. We have learning centers in each county of our seven county service area. Each center is tied to our main campus via fiber optics and microwave broadcast systems allowing us to offer a full range of classes at each site. Our current enrollment is over 10,000 in credit programs, over 60,000 registrations for community/continuing education classes, and nearly 5,000 enrolled in adult basic education/high school completion programs. We offer more than 55 applied science and technology programs, 16 career option programs, and 48 arts and sciences major areas.

Our seven county service area has a total population of approximately 350,000 including two urban centers, Cedar Rapids/Marion with a population of approximately 116,000 and Iowa City/Coralville with a population of approximately 52,000.

The Goals in Our Action Plan, Our Achievements, and Encountered Obstacles:

A. Create a new course: "Understanding Cultures: American Pluralism."

Based upon the discussion held with Virginia Meyn during her October on-site visit, and with the college Diversity Committee, we have moved to establish goals unique to the American Pluralism course but clearly related to the goals for all of the courses in our "Understanding Cultures" series. We have gone back to the "basic" questions once again, as suggested by Diane Eisenberg in her fax to us dated September 30, 1996:

1. What does it mean to be in America?
2. What do we hold in common?
3. What divides us?
4. What brings us together?

Our discussion of the content of this course is ongoing and still evolving. We have struggled to be inclusive without diluting the basic concept of the course. On December 4, 1996, we held an open meeting of the Diversity Committee to which we invited all interested members of the academic community. The purpose of the meeting was to define diversity within our community and our society. We requested that all attending who wished to speak on the subject provide a written position paper in advance. About 25 attended and more than a dozen submitted position papers. On February 5, 1997, we will be meeting again in an attempt to create an acceptable definition. We see this as central to our continuing progress on the course.

B. Host a visiting scholars series on American pluralism.

This has been done/is being done successfully. We have solicited and obtained cooperation throughout the college community on this project and have scheduled a broad range of activities that appeal to all segments of the academic community. Of special note might be the scheduling of an all-day workshop held on Wednesday, January 8, 1997, on Diversity,

International, and Intercultural Issues. The Stanley Foundation has provided financial support, allowing us to include outstanding speakers and to open the sessions to all interested faculty and staff. Approximately 40 individuals have reserved space at this workshop and, in addition, several of the other community colleges in the state are sending observers.

C. Restructure the American History curriculum from a two course sequence to a three course sequence allowing greater time for discussion of pluralism.

The absence of Peter Jaynes, currently teaching at our sister institution in the People's Republic of China, has clearly slowed these changes. His colleague, Professor Jack Wortman, who taught in the People's Republic of China during the 1995-96 academic year, has taken responsibility for implementation of the needed curricular changes and they are now slowly working their way through the appropriate departmental and committee approvals. We hope that implementation will be possible by Fall 1997.

D. Work on ways to offer linked or blocked courses with pluralism themes.

Our project mentor, Virginia Meyn, during her October site visit, correctly identified problems we have regularly encountered with paired, linked, or blocked courses, both within and outside our Honors program. Large numbers of part-time students, individuals who have met a core requirement in one or more of the linked or paired disciplines and are reluctant to take electives, and scheduling at a time that meets the needs of both staff and potential students all create obstacles.

At this point we do have the support of the Associate Deans in Arts and Humanities, Rhonda Kekke; in Social Science, Dan Tesar (a member of our grant team); and in English, Hope Burwell. All three are willing to work toward finding creative solutions to the difficulties we have

faced in the past. Suggestions from your office regarding successful programs we could examine would be much appreciated.

E. Influence the current review of literature courses encouraging a pluralism focus.

In response to a stated concern within the English Department, Hope Burwell, the Acting Associate Dean, sent an e-mail message to both concerned members of her department and to the three members of the Kirkwood Pluralism Grant team that stated in part:

> The on-going rejuvenation of the literature curriculum will indeed result in some courses which overtly deal with literature from other cultures, as do a number of our courses currently. I would be surprised, in an age when political correctness has been shaping literature curricula for more than 10 years, if we don't end up with an entire roster of core courses which deal with literature from other cultures.

Clearly the review is in progress and a pluralism focus is part of that review.

F. Revise the critical thinking component of the "Introduction to Liberal Arts" student orientation program" promoting pluralism as a basic element of the Kirkwood experience.

This has been successfully completed and was implemented during our Fall 1996 new student orientation.

What Remains to be Done?

In each of the areas we have discussed in this report, we have just started! Specifically, in terms of the grant, we would list the following:

- Details of American Pluralism need to be finalized. At the present time Nick Wysocki, a member of our grant team, is enrolled in an American Pluralism course at the University of Iowa and is using this experience to develop background information for our course.

- Progress needs to be made on regrouping of the American History offerings. The history faculty are in complete agreement with the concept so the remaining obstacles are largely bureaucratic. The absence of Peter Jaynes, the historian primarily responsible for this implementation (discussed earlier in this report) has slowed this activity, but we still hope for Fall 1997 as a target date.

- Linked courses remain a problem. Tentatively, Peter Jaynes will be offering a linked course this fall. He remains the strongest supporter of and advocate for this concept.

- Communication, established as a result of this grant, must be maintained and strengthened. We have discovered many more activities and programs in place than any of us were aware existed. We see the Diversity Committee as an important vehicle in making this happen.

What Has Been the Response of our Students and Colleagues to the Following Questions?

What does it mean to be an American?

No really profound answers here. The most thoughtful answers came from individuals who are or hope to become U.S. citizens through naturalization. We have about 400 international and many immigrant students as well as several faculty and staff members in this category.

An economist on our faculty, born and reared in Ghana and with a Ph.D. from England, talked about a "level playing field." He recognized the existence of racial discrimination but he stressed opportunity based on what rather than who you know.

A young man from Bulgaria stressed hope, and a chance to dream. "At home, opportunity is limited. The economy has collapsed, and I have no real chance for the future. Here (the U.S.) what I can do or be depends on me!"

Overall, the answers centered on the chance to be or do what one wishes, tempered with the recognition that getting there is up to me.

What Divides Us?

All of the standard answers appeared here: race, age, gender, income, geography. Frankly, two of the recurring responses, race and geography, were surprising. In Iowa, racial difference is minimal and yet, in a society where many of our rural or small town students had never gone to school with or even talked to a person of color, they perceived of race as a divisive factor.

The other surprise was parochialism based on geography. "We Iowans" or We Midwesterners" are different from "those people from _____." Our impression in talking to students and faculty were that television has increased racial and regional fears where personal experience had provided no real basis for these fears.

What Brings Us Together?

Again, very diverse responses. Some patriotic, "a love of country," some based on fear of "others." The most interesting answers, however, were those that came further into discussion. "Getting to know other people," showed up in one form or another many times. From students with no experience with anyone of a different background, this answer appeared many times. Once they "knew" other people, the stereotypes began to dissolve.

In an academic institution, we should have anticipated the number of answers that were, in a sense, academically oriented. "Music, good books, food" all occurred in conversation. Television was cited here both as divisive and as bringing us together. Global issues were not major topics. Neither faculty nor students mentioned international organizations such as the U.N.

What Do We Have in Common?

Varied answers here. Many at first appeared to be "off the wall." But a common theme emerged. The more people we talked to the more apparent it became that this common theme was **exposure**. Once they "knew" or "knew about" other people, other traditions, other societies, the more they could identify these people with their own lives. Overall, this response was most gratifying. It indicated that the efforts we have made to expose both our students and our community to a changing society have been quite worthwhile.

Lakeland
Community College

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Exploring America's Communities

A Report of Progress Made In Meeting Team Goals

I. Lakeland Community College Profile

Serving Lake County in northeast Ohio, the college's service district is bounded by Lake Erie to the north, rural Ashtabula County to the east, and urban Cuyahoga County, the home of Cleveland, to the west. The 1990 census showed a population of 215,500 (up 1.3% from 1980). Sixty three percent of the district's population is between the ages of 18 and 64. In the 1990 census, 96.9% of the district's population was white and 3% was minority (up from 2.2% in 1980), including 1.6% Black, .6% Asian/Pacific Islander, and .7% Hispanic. The per capita income in Lake County in 1993 was $20,450, while for Ohio it was $19,040.

Lakeland's fall, 1996, student credit enrollment was 8378, and the full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment was 4300. The percentage of women attending is 60%. The population of minority students, 5.1% of total, has risen by 22 % over the past five years. It is expected that this population will continue to increase.

II. Goals of Lakeland's Action Plan

From the beginning of their involvement in the project, the primary objective of the team's approach has been to identify strategies for enhancing the institutional climate for the conversation on American pluralism. From the beginning, the problem was how to make the conversation acceptable as both a subject for debate and a basis for action to effect changes. To this end, the team designed and implemented the following specific goals:

(1) establishment of a new course, Multicultural Literary Studies;

(2) formation of a representative task force on American Pluralism;

(3) establishment of a resource center of curricular and bibliographical material;

(4) proposal for a new general education outcome for the Associate of Arts and the Associate of Science which reflects attention to American Pluralism and Identity;

(5) proposal for a new major college goal on pluralism to prepare for accreditation..

III. Progress on Meeting the Goals

Goal One of the action plan, establishing the new course in multicultural literary studies, has been achieved. Meryl Schwartz wrote the course proposal and obtained Curriculum Committee approval in late April. The course was scheduled for fall quarter, 1996. Posters were distributed, a promotional piece was printed in the college course schedule, and fliers were distributed to faculty asking for their help in promoting it. However, the course failed to attract enough students to make instruction viable. It is scheduled for spring, 1997, and a stronger marketing campaign is planned.

The new course is designed to allow different thematic emphases each time it is taught. For the opening version, the theme is "Growing up in America." A variety of readings and films will be assigned, and students will be invited to survey the rich multiplicity of American experiences and compare them to their personal backgrounds. As stated in the new catalog description, "The course will address questions of social cohesion and division; the effects of history and social systems on individual experience; and the way literature and film both reflect and shape our perceptions of ourselves and members of different cultural groups."

Goal Two of the plan has been accomplished. As originally scheduled, the team met with the college's major joint academic planning group (Vice President's Academic Advisory Council) in May, and obtained approval to form a Task Force on American Pluralism. Membership includes

six faculty from five divisions, two staff members, and three administrators. The members met several times during fall quarter and began work to (1) identify current instructional activities in multicultural studies; (2) plan faculty development activities; and (3) coordinate academic, continuing education, and student activities programming.

During spring, 1996, team member Rollie Santos designed a questionnaire to survey current faculty instructional practices in the area of multicultural studies. The questionnaire was intended to provide the task force with information about the state of instructional design and the levels of commitment to this subject. After Dr. Santos collected the responses and tabulated the results, he distributed a summary analysis to the faculty. In addition, he submitted his paper, *Faculty's Perceptions of Pluralism: A Lakeland Community College Study*, to the ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges and was notified in October that the paper had been accepted for inclusion in the ERIC collection.

The task force's work on faculty development, the second area of its charge, began during the opening week of fall quarter, 1996. During the annual fall conference for faculty, staff, and administrators, the team scheduled a two hour session titled "Pluralism and Pedagogy: Developing Multicultural Curricula for Lakeland Classrooms." Although the session was scheduled opposite a popular technology fair, "Pluralism and Pedagogy" drew an estimated 45 people, primarily full-time faculty but also part-time faculty and administrators. The agenda was divided into three parts: a series of short presentations, a break to peruse assembled resources, and a workshop.

The event was chaired by team member and English instructor Meryl Schwartz, who was also the first presenter. After introductory remarks about the importance of multicultural education, Ms. Schwartz presented a brief overview of the history of multicultural curriculum transformation, including alternate schemata of the transformation process and a series of definitions, and she invited participants to take copies of the annotated bibliography of texts on multicultural education which she prepared. Another team member, Dean of Arts and Humanities Larry

Aufderheide, presented a short history of Lakeland's work on multicultural education, discussed the new North Central accreditation requirement that colleges demonstrate commitment in this area, and reviewed Lakeland's participation to date in the AACC American Pluralism and Identity Program. Sue Guthrie, immediate past chair of the curriculum committee and member of the college's degree review task force, reviewed the degree outcomes model that was adopted during 1995-96. Ms. Guthrie demonstrated how multicultural education was consistent with almost all of Lakeland's general education objectives. Team member and economics professor Rollie Santos then presented the results of the spring 1996 survey he had designed and tabulated, noting the range of attitudes to multicultural education that the survey had revealed. This part of the program concluded with a presentation by Loran Gulyas, social worker and sociology instructor. Mr. Gulyas discussed the pedagogical techniques he uses in sociology courses when discussing America's diversity. Faculty then broke into small groups and shared ideas and concerns.

Numerous positive responses to this program were received, and faculty have reported experimenting with some of the pedagogical techniques discussed. The team's challenge was to sustain the momentum achieved, and one way it did so was through the visit of Naomi Tutu to Lakeland's campus. Educator, lecturer, and anthropologist, Naomi Tutu is one of the daughters of Archbishop (emeritus) Desmond Tutu. Organizers for her visit included faculty, staff and administrators from the academic affairs, community education, and student services. Spearheading the activity was team member Meryl Schwartz, who received significant help from Michelle Posey Murphy, the Assistant Director for Cultural Diversity.

Naomi Tutu's visit comprised three main events. During the morning, she visited a human services class, "Dealing with Diversity," where she informally discussed her own experiences as an African student at an elite school in England. Over lunch, Ms. Tutu presented to the faculty, administration, and selected staff a discussion of multicultural education, focusing on the challenges South Africa faces in developing a post-apartheid, truly multicultural curriculum. Finally, during an evening lecture open to the community, Ms. Tutu spoke on "Overcoming Apartheid's Legacy." She evoked for the audience the experience of growing up under apartheid

and discussed the complex tasks South Africa faces in the areas of education and women's issues. Parallels to American concerns were implicit throughout the talk, and during the question period there was discussion of America's struggles with some of the same issues facing South Africa.

Goal Three, establishing a campus resource center, has been accomplished. Situated in the office of team member and Dean Larry Aufderheide, the Multicultural Studies Center consists of files of faculty syllabi, journal articles on pedagogy, course outlines, programs from other institutions, special issues of community college journals focusing on multicultural studies, and selected books with a similar focus. Work is currently underway to formalize a list of the Center's holdings and distribute it to the faculty. Notice has already gone out that faculty are welcome to visit the Center and browse the collection.

Goal Four, identifying American Pluralism as a general education outcome in Lakeland's degrees, is in the discussion stage. It is expected that such formal curricular transformation will require at least two to three years. The work of revising course outlines so that learning objectives based on pluralism will be explicit begins in the context of Lakeland's switch from quarters to semesters.

Goal Five, to propose a major college goal on pluralism, will be addressed in 1998, the year the college begins to prepare for self-study for continuing accreditation. It is expected that goals four and five will be addressed simultaneously as the college converts to semesters and prepares for the North Central visit.

IV. The Obstacles

Lakeland faces a number of challenges as it seeks to institutionalize a curriculum that more frequently and effectively addresses American pluralism. In addition to the twin problems of faculty and student resistance, as discussed in the team's original proposal, institutional inertia and structural barriers must be overcome.

Faculty resistance expresses itself in a variety of forms. Passive resistance was expressed through the low rate of response (25%) to the survey the team distributed in the spring of 1996. More active resistance could be seen in some returned surveys. Where faculty are not hostile to the idea of multicultural curriculum development, many resist nonetheless because of the work involved; because they believe the issues cannot be incorporated into their discipline or their already overloaded courses; or because they do not feel they are receiving sufficient incentive or support for this work.

Student resistance expresses itself in classroom responses to material currently in the curriculum and in reluctance to register for courses focusing on multicultural issues. The first attempt to market a new English course, "Multicultural Literary Studies," was unsuccessful. With only six students registered, the decision was made to postpone the first section of the course until the spring 1997 quarter. The marketing problems can be attributed to a number of factors beside lack of interest, including the lengthy period between spring marketing efforts and summer registration for the fall quarter; insufficient emphasis in publicity materials to the course's thematic approach; and the fact that the course is not yet part of the Ohio transfer module. Although the course will not be on the transfer module until 97-98, the team will take measures to correct the other problems faced. Already an optimum time-slot has been scheduled. Preparations for more mailings have been made, including mailings targeted to area teachers; publicity will focus on the course theme rather than its rather dry title; and publicity targeted to current students will coincide with the registration period for spring quarter.

V. The Work Remaining

In addition to renewed marketing of the new course on "Multicultural Literary Studies," and the activities planned for under goals two and three, the work remaining falls to Pluralism Task Force, which has set up four subcommittees. Subcommittee One is charged with identifying current instructional content and methods. They will be collecting syllabi and surveying the specific content and methods being used by faculty already integrating multicultural issues into their

courses. Subcommittee Two is charged with planning faculty development activities, including a funding proposal. They will develop a two-tiered faculty development program: the first tier will utilize internal expertise and operational budgets, and the second will draw on outside speakers whose expertise can help fill in internal gaps. Funding will be sought from both internal and external sources. Subcommittee Three is charged with coordinating academic, continuing education, and student activities programming. While it has already started an ambitious program of coordination, the subcommittee continues to investigate new avenues. Subcommittee Four is charged with planning for student involvement in the project. They are developing focus groups that can help both in marketing courses and in developing effective classroom approaches.

VI. The responses of Students and Colleagues

While one of the team members integrated into her fall quarter composition classes the questions posed by the "national conversation," the emphasis of our team's action plan lay elsewhere. Certainly consideration of what it means to be an American has been implicit in the conversations about curricular change the team members have had with colleagues, but practical and philosophical questions of curriculum and pedagogy have dominated discussions. In effect, the team has been laying the groundwork for institutionalizing a permanent commitment to classroom and community discussion of American pluralism and identity. The faculty and staff who have attended the programs to date want to increase their own expertise on America's diverse cultures and seek specific answers to their questions about integrating this material into their discipline and courses, building student interest, and responding to student resistance. The quality of these discussions has been high, with participants expressing a great deal of interest in preparing students to live in a diverse society, succeed in a global economy, behave in a manner consistent with social justice, and engage in the critical thinking skills that will enable all of the above. When composition students were asked to discuss what it means to be an American, they responded with varying degrees of interest, but demonstrated, over the course of a sustained unit of reading and writing about America's diversity, an ability to go well beyond the cliches of the "melting pot" to a serious consideration of the sources of unity and division in America's cultures.

LEE - COLLEGE

December 11, 1996

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Washington, DC 20036

Exploring America's Communities: Lee College Progress Report

Established in 1934, Lee College is a comprehensive, public, two-year community college located in Baytown, Texas, a suburb of Houston. In addition, Lee College serves portions of the largely rural counties of Liberty and Chambers. Through a variety of programs and services, Lee College prepares students for success in higher education or employment. Lee College also provides a broad base of programs including extension courses, adult education, continuing education, and community services. During the 1996-97 academic year, Lee College will enroll over 12,000 credit-seeking students. These students reflect the service-area community in diversity: 71 percent Anglo, 15 percent Hispanic (most of whom are Mexican-American), 12 percent African-American, and 2 percent other minorities. The college offers a variety of degrees—Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Sciences—in 34 disciplines, 27 of which are technical areas. The number of technical courses reflects the heavy industrial base of the Baytown community, which includes several large petrochemical and chemical companies. Because, however, of its long history and traditional junior college roots, Lee

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Lee College does not discriminate on the basis of gender, disability, race, color, age, religion or national origin.

College also has a strong liberal arts base and a core curriculum that stresses the humanities.

Since the primary mission of Lee College is to serve the educational needs of its community, the goal of its Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground project has been to enhance the faculty's ability to fulfill its mission. The project team had concerns that the diversity of the faculty did not match the diversity of the student body. The team's focus, therefore, was to broaden the cultural understanding of the faculty so that the faculty would, in turn, incorporate additional materials into its courses. In particular, the team focused on the rich Hispanic culture of the Mexican-American students in the college population. The specific goal was to conduct workshops that examined the commonality existing between a selected number of cultural themes important to this Hispanic population and those of the entire student body. The team hoped that increasing the faculty's knowledge and comfort-level with these themes would encourage infusion of relevant literature and history into the existing curriculum.

As a result of our team's efforts, the people associated with Lee College have had several opportunities to consider the topic of American pluralism and identity. The team and its mentor, Dr. Salazar, have discussed the issues with our college president and academic dean, as well as with the chair of our institution's Allied Health division. The result of these conversations, if the state accepts our recommendation, will be a significant change in the academic preparation of future Lee College graduates entering the health care occupations. Later, in a public forum on the cinematic depiction of the American west, whose attendees included actress Carol Baker, Hollywood producer Burt Kennedy, novelist Elmer Kelton, and the western film savant, Jon Tuska, the question of to what

extent the shared experience of the western movie was one of the cultural ties that, like the viewing of televised sports events today, has unified the American public since World War II. The film experts were also asked to what extent the western movie of those years tended to marginalize non-white, minority Americans. Other accomplishments from our year's activity in the AACC project include the compilation of a bibliography of printed material relating either directly or indirectly with the subject of death as it is dealt with by writers who approach the subject from a Mexican, Central American, and South American point of view. Finally, the Lee College community has also benefited from an improvement in our library's collection of materials, which now better reflect the lives and interests of our Spanish speaking community.

As a team, our greatest obstacle has been a lack of time to dedicate to the goals of our mission. Not only have we been busy teaching our classes and serving on our committees, but our colleagues' time as well has been equally occupied. At one workshop for Lee College faculty, at which we spent an afternoon helping instructors learn to pronounce the names of the Hispanic students in their classes, many of our colleagues were unable to attend, not for a lack of commitment to their students nor for a lack of interest in our topic, but simply because the Lee College faculty is very busy.

Much remains to be done with this project. Because of the timing of the AACC grant and the timing of the academic year, the anticipated year of the project was actually compressed into one fall semester. The original proposal called for a symposium program that spotlighted important aspects of Mexican-American culture with a component for students and a separate one for faculty. The planning for such a symposium for Spring 1997 is currently under way. With the financial support of the college Lyceum

Committee and the literary resources of the Arte Publico Press, located at the University of Houston, the college is planning an April 1997 program featuring a number of Mexican-American authors who stress cultural elements in their work.

In addition, the large Allied Health faculty at the college is interested in developing a course that would be required of their students that would combine conversational Spanish with education about the cultural practices of the Texas border region, particularly those that surround medicine and healing. *Curanderoismo*, the focus of one of the project workshops, is only part of the rich tradition of natural healing that composes the border culture. With a growing Hispanic population in our service area, the Lee College Allied Health faculty feel that graduates of their programs would profit from an increased ability to communicate with patients, as well as an increased understanding of their patients' concerns and medical backgrounds. Because, however, the curriculum for Allied Health students is an extremely crowded one, these students do not have space for the traditional two to four semesters of college Spanish. The project team will, therefore, work with the Allied Health faculty over the next two years to develop a one-semester, three-credit-hour course that combines specialized language instruction with history, literature, and cultural components. If approved by the state and other accrediting agencies, this course would become a required part of the Lee College nursing curriculum in the 1999-2000 academic year.

A third major area of continued work on this project is increased library holdings. The project team is currently working with the college administration to find grant money to improve library holdings in the area of Hispanic, particularly Mexican-American, literature, language, history, and culture. The library has already used a bibliography

developed by our team's mentor, Dr. Carmen Salazar, to order several hundred dollars worth of additional materials. If grant money can be secured, other titles from the bibliographies developed by the project team members will be ordered and a bibliography of materials available in the Lee College library will be developed.

Basically, what remains to be done is for the conversation on American pluralism and identity to spread. The conversations that we have held have been received and expanded with enthusiasm, but the Lee College team remains convinced that time to explore, consider, and converse is the true enemy of finding that common ground which we all seek.

The grand philosophical questions: What does it mean to be an American? What divides us? What brings us together? What do we have in common? Are difficult ones to engage faculty and students' attention because they focus instead on the mundane questions of education: What will be on the next test? What do I have to do to pass this course? What do I have to do to get my students' attention? How can I possibly grade these papers before next Tuesday? Most, in fact, seem uncomfortable with these questions and inclined to let only the most assertive respond. However, with time and encouragement, students, in particular, are fascinated with questions about what divides us and what brings us together.

Recently, a small group of sophomore students, all women, began by identifying gender, ethnicity and religion as areas that divide us. Their reasoning was that these topics are uncomfortable for mixed groups to discuss. As one African-American student said, "The surest way to bring any conversation with a white person to a halt is the mention of race. I noticed this last year when I made the statement that most African-Americans

thought O. J. Simpson was innocent. That was it--no more discussion of the Simpson trial. In fact, I started saying it on purpose when I was tired of hearing about Simpson. It worked every time." All the students agreed. Americans, they said, are curious about differences among groups, but they do not want to hurt others' feelings or to start disagreements. In fact, the group decided after considerable discussion that perhaps one thing that unites ordinary Americans is our dislike of and discomfort with controversy and difference. Americans, they said, prefer to ignore difference, especially if the points of view cannot easily be resolved or are based on long-standing or traditional conflicts. Ironically, several students said afterwards that the discussion was the best of the semester.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I

LEEWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Office of the Dean of Instruction

Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground

Leeward Community College was established in the Fall of 1968 to serve the Leeward coast and Central O'ahu districts. It is located between the Pearl City and Waipahu communities. Situated on approximately 49 acres of mildly sloping land, the campus design provides a commanding and magnificent view of Pearl Harbor. Between 5500-6000 students are enrolled each semester in liberal arts and vocational education programs offered on campus and at an off-campus installation in one of the rural communities. Three thousand seven hundred forty (63%) of the students were self identified as being of Asian/Pacific Islander heritage.

A joint project in 1993-94 with Pearl City High School that was funded by a $9,500 grant from the Hawai'i Committee for the Humanities inspired the College's participation in the *Exploring America's Communities* project. We considered the high school's oral history project to be a natural partner for collaboration with Leeward Community College's "Hawaiian Style Theater" course. A $12,000 grant from the State Foundation for Culture and the Arts supported our drama students' efforts to artistically interpret the oral history materials for presentation to the general community.

The success of this project inspired the College to expand its focus to include Waipahu, as well as Pearl City and seek a slot as one of the campuses involved in the *Exploring America's Communities* project. Working as a team, Donald Thomson (Professor CC in American Studies and Sociology), Patricia Kennedy (Assistant Professor CC in History), and Douglas Dykstra (Acting Curriculum Specialist and project director) examined the multi-cultural strands in the communities by curriculum infusion in two existing core courses, Kennedy's *American History 282* and Thomson's *American Studies 211*. Videotaped co-curricular panel presentations and activities by community leaders and locally available experts supplemented perspectives presented in the classrooms.

Each co-curricular session elucidated one of the goals of the project. Receptions held after the sessions set an informal tone for audience and speakers to continue the discussion. Students followed up the sessions with in-class discussions and journal reactions to ensure a broad range of reflective responses. The line-up of sessions featured a strong agenda of speakers and qualified moderators. Topics were as follows:

1. **Labor Unions & the Coalescence of Community: 1946 Sugar Strike**

This session emphasized the forces that built community solidarity in Waipahu and throughout the Territory of Hawai'i among disparate ethnic groups of workers. Striker solidarity and logistics under the

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leadership of the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union opened the door to middle class aspirations for agricultural laborers. A "deal me in" mentality took hold among Hawai'i's working classes as a social revolution paved the way for a subsequent political revolution that propelled the Democratic Party to dominance. Waipahu and Pearl City have been among the strongholds for the Democrats ever since.

Students regarded this as the most successful and informative of the panel discussions. Their responses indicate appreciation for the community building influences of the strike. Moreover, many students considered the session to be a valuable lesson in personal and family histories. Typical of journal entries was:

> *I find it wonderful the way people pulled together and acted together regardless of ethnic backgrounds. A valuable lesson should have been learned and remembered from this strike. People today, though, have forgotten the struggles and forgotten the respect that those people had for one another.*

Student recognition that more than a labor strike was chronicled by the session pleased us. They realized that this event represented an achievement that made possible the capacity for "associated living". Neither ethnic differences nor social differences would divide the community the way they had in an earlier age. The success of the sugar strike made mutual respect and hope for the future common denominators of the majority of people in Hawai'i.

2. What Hawaiian Sovereignty Means to Non-Hawaiians

This session induced project participants to face the issue that American community has damaged indigenous communities. This is especially true in Hawai'i as the only American state to once have been an internationally recognized sovereign kingdom. For us, the question of forces that bring us together is more than an academic exercise.

The sovereignty advocates stunned the audience with their diametrically opposing outlooks on the future of sovereignty and the role of non-Hawaiians. The tension-suffused hall motivated many students to carry on their discussions informally afterwards. This was the first time that many of the students were exposed to how divisive the issue of sovereignty is in the Hawaiian community.

One speaker described a concept of sovereignty that invited the non-Hawaiians to support the cause as full fledged citizens in an independent Hawai'i. The other speaker envisaged a future for an independent Hawai'i in which only the ethnically Hawaiian (Kanaka Maoli) inhabitants would be full citizens. Student response was definitively supportive of a just restitution for Hawaiians that recognizes the rights of all who call Hawai'i home. The call for a Hawai'i made free by and for the Kanaka Maoli triggered responses similar to this one:

> *We cannot turn back the clock, nor do I wish to. I love my non-Hawaiian husband and my part-Hawaiian children. ... If they (Hawaiian sovereignty advocates) can not get along how do they plan on living together?*

Few people question the appropriateness of some measure of restitution because the American

Government's official apology indicates wrongdoing. However, the more racially exclusive options generally shocked the non-Hawaiians and part-Hawaiians alike. Inclusiveness is a part of the creed that appears to be characteristic of community standards that have taken root in the islands.

3. **Localism and the Late Arrivals: The Samoan Community**

This session explored the stresses that impinge upon immigrants who arrive after a polyglot community has stabilized and developed its pidgin language. Admixtures may not be readily embraced by an established community. The greatest influx of Samoan immigration occurred in Hawai'i after the end of World War II. Although Samoa shares Polynesian cultural traditions with the Hawaiians, the hybridized community of the islands is polyglot not strictly Polynesian now. Samoans have had difficulties gaining acceptance.

Student respondents recognized the challenge facing Samoans as they struggle against stereotypical labels. Student understanding of the value of cultural tolerance and avoiding stereotypical judgments was impressive as in the following conclusion:

> *... I learned a great deal about our local Samoan community. I never knew what the word "Sa moa" meant: Sacred Center says a lot about who they are and what they represent. I do honestly believe that as a society we need to recognize our Samoan community for their accomplishments and not label them or hold them down because they are culturally different.* *(underscoring added)*

Repeatedly the use of the possessive pronoun "our" Samoan community impressed us as a sign of inclusiveness not paternalism. Moreover, it was used to signify links with others as a defining characteristic of the community and we took this as a sign of implicit understanding of the qualities required for "associated living".

4. **Rediscovery of Community: Old Pearl City Walking Tour**

We sought to inspire students to see that the process of local history research is as important as the product. The significance of process and product as reflected in all facets of this project has impressed us since its inception as a joint oral history project with Pearl City High School. The process employed has created an ever expanding network of institutions and individuals committed to recapturing and reflecting upon the history of the fascinating little community on a peninsula in Pearl Harbor that has now become O'ahu's largest suburb. The product takes the form of oral history transcripts, articles by scholars and professionals, an outstanding pictorial book, and a community college student written script to stage a provocative thematic production set in a local history context.

Students on the walking tour realized that the community of Pearl City was far more intriguing than the strip malls, car dealerships and sub-division grids that dominate the town today. Finding its history by speaking to its veteran residents and listening to the vivid images describing a bygone era gave them an appreciation for the process as a means of reaching out across generations. Real appreciation was apparent as some students remarked

that they could remember their parents talking about some of the events and places described during the walking tour.

5. **Post Modern Economic Change: Waipahu Bounces Back**

Waipahu provided an outstanding example of a town undergoing the pangs of economic change. The shut down of the sugar economy has threatened the viability of the town. Our speakers recommended keeping the theme of the plantation as the way to maintain the social compact that made Waipahu. The motif will be there even as discount malls and suburban housing developments mushroom on the perepheries of the old town. The amount of planning that is being done to preserve the atmosphere of the old town surprised students.

The extra attention given to Waipahu is understandable given its juxtaposition to Pearl City where the wrenching transformation took place as a result of the war. Consequently no planning was done, nor effort made to preserve continuity with its past because war objectives were more important than community relations.

The final speaker presented the proposition that Waipahu could both preserve old town roots and pursue new developments in associated living with the elderly by following through on its lead as the top site in the state for residential care homes. Preparation for the retirement of baby boomers and keeping the generations integrated in existing communities could go hand in hand as a means of feeding the economy of a town in need of both hope for the future and links to the past.

Community Values Inquiry

The basis for the values inquiry central to this project is the interplay between the individual rights based values and the responsibility based communitarian values that have both been a part of the American heritage. Problems arise in American culture due to the inability to recognize that it is possible and necessary to draw from both value systems simultaneously. The industrial revolution has promoted the individual rights based values, and this has produced a record of modernizing growth that has propelled the country to world leadership while producing a variety of threatening challenges to the concept of community.

The Good Society by Robert Bellah, et. al. was the common text used to induce our students to address the issue of values at the foundation of strong communities. Student discussions and journal entries suggested that the brightest opinion leaders in class understood the significance of communitarian values and the quest for associated living so important to community building as, for instance in the following:

> *A "good society" has a sense of unity and community. ... Society today keeps reverting back to the individual goals and not looking at the "whole picture". ... I think, as we move along our separate ways, we forget to see the whole picture. Each of us does need many other people to get what we as individuals need. There must be a way to come together as a whole, work toward the common good, and satisfy the individual wants.*

This project has created the experiences that have opened new territory and new thoughts to the students involved,

as well as the students from any of the classes that may have recommended our co-curricular events as extra-credit opportunities.

Now that the project is approaching completion, we are preparing to institutionalize it by expanding the network of involved instructors, developing new instructional partnerships and disseminating the tapes of co-curricular sessions to the community. Foremost among the achievements is the proposal to teach a learning community seminar using three professors from the University of Hawai'i at West O'ahu and three from Leeward Community College. They will jointly teach a nine credit seminar as a capstone course for the Associate of Arts degree and as a threshold course for the West O'ahu baccalaureate. Team members, Patricia Kennedy and Donald Thomson will be scheduled to teach during the fall semester 1997 as the link between the project and the proposed learning community. Together, they established a commitment to *Community* as the theme for this endeavor with their West O'ahu colleagues. The University of Hawai'i will support the project with a $21,700 grant from its Educational Improvement Fund.

Finally, no project unfolds exactly as planned and this one was no exception. However, all the obstacles are subject to resolution by taking compensatory measures in the future.

The book by Bellah that was selected to induce students to think about the values of the good society was too theoretical to communicate effectively with our students. Although the brightest of them were able to stay with the challenge and discover the message, most of the students were very discouraged. A book like The End of Work by Jeremy Rifkin could induce thinking about many of the same community values issues in a manner that would be far more accessible to community college students. Our advice would be to read Bellah for yourself and assign Rifkin for your students.

We also did not publicize our activities as much as we might have. None of the team members was particularly inclined to seek external publicity. All of us were produced by an academic culture that encourages achievement rather than seeking recognition for it. However, the support that has been given by the University of Hawai'i's Educational Improvement Fund has been more gratifying than any number of newspaper articles.

We still are working on editing the tapes of the co-curricular sessions to prepare them for broadcast on the public access television station in the spring semester. We have recently finished the script for the voice over narration of the walking tour of the Pearl City old town. This involves coordinating video images, still pictures, narration and background music. These tapes will be with the team in their final form when we arrive in New Orleans. Finally, I must get the letters out to public schools and the sister campuses of the community college system about the availability of the tapes. I have many people who are deserving of heartfelt thanks for all they have done to make this project possible, and those letters will go out in the spring semester.

I. DESCRIPTION OF COLLEGE.The Metropolitan Community Colleges of Kansas City Missouri represents a four-campus system spread throughout the greater Kansas city area. The campuses include Blue Springs/Independence in the east, Longview in the south, Maple Woods in the north, and Penn Valley in the center of town. The current District was established in 1964. Overall the District serves almost 18,000 students, day and night, full-time and part-time. Each campus reflects demographics of its location, for students prefer to attend college near their home. Consequently, Penn Valley, located in the heart of Kansas City, attracts a much more diverse student population than do the other campuses, although Longview, due to the shifting demographics of the south Kansas City area, is beginning to serve a more diverse student population. Blue Springs/Independence and Maple Woods' student bodies are 96 to 98% white. Almost two-thirds of the students are female and the average student age is 29 with the median age 24.

II. GOALS OF ACTION PLAN: Our team formulated the course Humanities 161: Exploring the American Experience to address a perceived lack of curriculum dealing with American pluralism and identity. While individual instructors had addressed diversity issues in their classes, our college had no institutional recognition of emerging diversity in the form of regular course offerings, and courses such

as Women's Literature and African-American Literature or African-American History were tied more into the field of study than into a general study of pluralism. Our course attempted to narrow its scope by focusing on pluralism in the Midwest. Since we felt that the Midwest and Kansas City itself represented a microcosm of the larger issue, since it was a diverse metropolitan community that featured pockets of ethnicity and urban development surrounded by rural areas. In short, we felt that the area reflected the American movement from agricultural to urbanized society and the movements of multicultural groups that accompanied it.

III. WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED: Our faculty selected a core history text to address multiculturalism which we planned to use as a background for the course. After much thought, we chose Ronald Takaki's **A Different Mirror** and supplemented it with literary texts reflecting the groups we wished to address. For the Native American segment of the course, we chose Momaday's **The Way to Rainy Mountain**, at the suggestion of Lawana Trout. For the African American portion, we chose Hughes' **Not Without Laughter**; for the Asian American section, Kingston's **Woman Warrior**, and for the Hispanic portion, Cisneros' **Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories.**

We also felt that any course that dealt with the American multicultural experience in the Midwest could not overlook the contributions of European settlers, so we included a segment that featured Cather's **My Antonia** to present diversity among the white settlers also.

Our team consisted of four instructors, one from History, and the others from English, and each attended each class. One instructor

would present material and the others would punctuate the material with commentary involving the other members of the team and the class as well. Interruption was viewed not as rudeness but as spontaneous involvement, and the class never seemed confused as to which teacher was expert in which segment. Sharing the ideas of the instructors with the students was vital to our course's success.

IV. OBSTACLES: The obstacles to the course were expected. The campus where the course was taught was not especially diverse. The gender makeup reflected that of the District as a whole, but there were no African-Americans in the class, one Asian American and several Hispanic-Americans. Since the class pretty much reflected the makeup of students at that campus, we expected more difficulty than we actually experienced. All members of the team were white also, but we brought in guest speakers from other colleges who shared their experiences as members of the groups we studied and added a valuable dimension to our endeavor.

V. WHAT IS LEFT TO DO: The class was designed to be telecast after one semester of classroom presentation, and the team is still investigating how that can best be done. We fear that presenting the class as a telecourse on four campuses will compromise the spontaneity of the class as well as the interaction between teacher and teacher and teacher and student that we found so critical to the course's success. We probably will not be able to offer the course in its present form again due to budgetary constraints so we must find a solution to the dilemma.

VI. HOW WE ADDRESSED ISSUES OF DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM: Throughout much of the course, we focused on the differences among the various groups we studied, but in the last few weeks we focused sharply on the commonalities all groups shared. Our final exam was an in-class essay, open book, that addressed this very issue, and the responses were encouraging and, in some ways, surprising in terms of how the students saw the commonalities. One outstanding student showed how all Americans value family, safety, and freedom, an approach that showed that our students were assimilating material well and redefining the issues in creative ways.

PROGRESS REPORT

"Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground"

History and Demographics of MGCCC

The roots of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC) go back 85 years. In 1911, a number of prominent citizens donated 656 acres of land and 626 dollars to establish an agricultural institution in the small town of Perkinston, Mississippi. A year later three buildings were completed, and the institution began operation in the fall of 1912.

In 1962, fifty years later, the Governor of the State of Mississippi signed into law House Bill 597 which created the present Gulf Coast Junior College District. This bill wiped out county lines--the four separate counties of Harrison, Jackson, Stone, and George became one district. The district concept was a pilot program for the state (and was one of the first in the nation). In 1965, two branches of the college were built in Harrison and Jackson counties and a multi-campus district was reality.

Later Centers were built in George County, at Keesler Air Force Base, and in West Harrison County. A final Center was established as a joint partnership with Mississippi Power Company and Harrison County Development Commission to serve as a training facility.

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College is located in the four southeastern counties of Mississippi. As a multi-campus entity, there are three vibrant and active campuses in the four most populated counties--Stone, Harrison, and Jackson. The Central Office to administer the diversity of MGCCC is located in Stone County on the Perkinston Campus.

Demographically MGCCC serves communities that range from rural to urban. The two coastal counties, Harrison and Jackson, are part of the second most populous urban area in the state with nearly 300 people per square mile. Conversely, the two inland counties, George and Stone, are rural with population densities between 28 and 38 per square mile.

The college district's population is 333,346 people and has achieved a 8.5% growth rate in the last 5 years. Within this population base 78% are white, 19.5% black, 2% Asian, .25% Native American, and .25% other. Unfortunately, 15% of the district's population base includes families who subsist at the poverty level.

The college serves nearly 20,000 people through its credit and noncredit programs each year. This means that approximately 5.9% of the MGCCC District is served in some way by the college. The

"typical" student at MGCCC is a 28 year old white female enrolled full-time in an academic major. Females account for 57% of the student body and males 43%.

The average age of academic students is 26.3 years, technical students 30.1 years, and vocational students 30.1 years.

The racial/ethnic composition of the student body closely parallels the district's. White students account for 78% of the full-time enrollment and 86% of the part-time students. Interestingly, the fastest growing segment of MGCCC is Asian/Pacific Islanders. In the past 5 years this group has grown by 105%. In addition, the number of Hispanic students has increased by more than 31%, and the number of black students has risen by 12%.

In the Fall of 1996 the district had 5,232 full-time credit enrolled students. For Fiscal Year 1996, there were 10,507 students enrolled in Academic courses, 2,616 in Technical courses, and 4,914 in Noncredit courses.

Our MGCCC district will continue its purpose: "to develop the cultural, intellectual, and character resources of the people of this area, point the way to an economic livelihood based on natural resources, and promote responsible citizenship."

Primary Goals of Action Plan

The main objective of our action plan has been to establish a new, team-taught, interdisciplinary course, **Film: the American Experience.** The desired objective has been to explore through great American films, selected historical readings, novels, and short stories, America's process as a polyglot attempting to assimilate itself but often dividing itself along lines of race, prejudice, bigotry, religion, and sex. Additionally, the course seeks to evaluate through films, readings, and discussions what unites us: brotherhood, common interest, tolerance, and respect, as well as greed, religious fervor, love of sports and music, and our response to war.

To involve colleagues in this project, we planned at least one workshop on multiculturalism. Additionally, we scheduled this course to be offered during the Fall Semester of 1996.

Action Plan Accomplishments

1. Instead of just one workshop on multiculturalism and the subject of our new course, our team conducted four workshops which reached approximately 250 staff, faculty, administrators, and students (over the Community College Network).

2. We had planned to offer one section of the new course. **Film: the American Experience** filled by the second day of preregistration, so we opened another section at night.

3. As we will be bringing copies of the Fall syllabus and the revised Spring syllabus to the January meeting, we will be able to show more clearly how we have juxtaposed topics, times, and questions. Through films and novels such as Ragtime, The Reivers, To Kill a Mockingbird, The Grapes of Wrath, A Raisin in the Sun, All the President's Men, Philadelphia, and Dead Man Walking, we exposed the students to a variety of divisive and unifying factors in American society. Among the topics examined in the course were racism, ethnic and religious bigotry, cultural conflicts, AIDS, homophobia, and capital punishment.

Obstacles

With the tremendous financial support from the administration, the fine technical support from our team administrator, Assistant Dean Foster Flint, as well as the advisory support from colleagues, we have been able to develop a course in record time and see it successfully integrated into the scheduled curriculum.

The major obstacles have been trying to cover the history of America through film, presenting so many topics concerning racism, bigotry, greed, etc., and attempting to create a balanced view of America from the vast quantity of material that was available.

"The Best is Yet to Be"

We must include more multicultural films; the course was well represented with films and readings dealing with blacks and whites. However, we seek to include more Asian and Native American films. Furthermore, we need to include more films focusing on gender issues, e.g., Norma Rae, The Joy Luck Club, etc. Next semester, Spring, 1997, we have two sections of **Film: The American Experience** scheduled on the Jefferson Davis Campus, and twenty-six student have already preregistered. Additionally, we are offering the course on the Community College Network.

Responses to What it Means to be an American

During the semester, we have experienced the gamut of emotions, ranging from joyous laughter, sincere appreciation of the endurance of the family in Grapes of Wrath, utter disgust for the hypocrisy of Elmer Gantry, to heated debate over capital punishment in Dead Man Walking. While some students were reluctant to acknowledge the existence of some of the situations, such as anti-semitism, and others, at times seemed embarrassed to talk about

sensitive issues, such as AIDS, the exchange of ideas underscored the multi-cultural aspects of America, and emphasized the importance of mutual respect among the diverse elements of our society. So many ideas have been expressed verbally as well as in writing. Yet, one group of five, a community in the making, wrote the following paper which seems to sum up many of the ideas expressed this semester:

"To be born in America is to be born into a country of great diversity. Nowhere else on earth is there such a mingling of race, culture, and heritage. America is called the great 'melting pot,' but the country should be likened to a mixer on very low speed. The people in this country do not melt into one homogenous blend. Americans are more like the ingredients in a stew. They each retain their own individuality and uniqueness. These differences are what give America its flavor. Our differences can be used as either an asset or a liability. Every person has his own inherent weaknesses and strengths. We can focus on the other person's weaknesses and ignore our own, or we can use each other's strengths to counterbalance our own weaknesses. The ability to do the latter is what makes America strong, and the tendency do the first is what hurts this country.

Of all obstacles to unity in the United States, economic disparity builds the highest and most effective barriers. Differences in race, religious beliefs, educational level, and social class may separate people, but income is truly the great divider. An immense difference in income levels exists in America. As long as it exists, there will be conflict and division among Americans.

It is hard to rise above, or get ahead even a little, when just feeding a family is a man's top priority. The Grapes of Wrath and Native Son are prime examples of this. The Joads were honest, hard-working people. They had struggled their whole lives to make their little farm productive. They had not time for education because everyone worked on the farm. Without education they had no job skills, and without job skills they were unable to find work when they arrived in California. They were destitute when they lost their farm.

Bigger Thomas and his family were in the same predicament. The mother did not earn enough to support her family, so Bigger had to quit school in the eighth grade and go to work. There was not money for education, but without education it was impossible for Bigger to find a decent job. The money he and his mother earned was barely enough to feed them. There was not way out of the cycle of ignorance and poverty. Bigger realized the hopelessness of his life, and that, not some inborn evil, is what drove him to kill.

Dead Man Walking clearly voiced that there were no rich men on

Death Row. This is a sad commentary on America's justice system. If the main character had had enough money to hire a more experienced attorney, he would not have been either.

The Age of Innocence and The Molly Maguires were set in the same time period and in close geographic regions. The characters in the movies were from different social classes, but it was money that kept them apart. The main concerns of the affluent, New York society crowd were clothes and looks. The coal miners of Pennsylvania, including the young children, were working fourteen hours a day, seven days a week, just to eat.

In the United States, as it is worldwide, it is our humanity that unites us. In both novels and films were the characters who were able to see beyond color, religion, or class, and accept others as worthwhile human beings that made the difference. Atticus Finch (To Kill a Mockingbird), Max the lawyer (Native Son), Sister Helen Prejean (Dead Man Walking), and Boss (The Reivers), were memorable characters because of their ability to understand human nature. They did not see rich and poor, or black and white, or good and evil. They simply saw people and were wise enough to know that people are different, but that difference does not mean that some are better than others. They valued and respected human life. Each of these characters tried to pass this wisdom on to other people, and by doing so they removed some of the ignorance in the world. Only by learning about and accepting our differences, will America ever be truly united."

MONROE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES: IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

PROGRESS REPORT

Monroe Community College was founded in 1961 as part of a statewide system of two year institutions designed to provide technical, paraprofessional and university-parallel education. It opened in 1962 with 720 students and a fulltime faculty of 36. Today, M.C.C. is one of thirty community colleges within the State University of New York (SUNY), and serves 14,000 matriculated and non-matriculated students. SUNY community colleges are financed by New York State, student tuition, and a local government sponsor. M.C.C.'s local sponsor is the Monroe County Legislature.

The College's first campus was located in downtown Rochester, at 410 Alexander Street, in the former East High School. In June, 1968, the College moved to a new, modern campus at 1000 East Henrietta Road. This move placed the College on a 314 acre suburban site in the town of Brighton, just three and one half miles from downtown Rochester. In January, 1992, M.C.C. opened the Damon City Campus, in the heart of downtown Rochester. This second campus has proven to be very successful. Rochester is the third largest city in New York State and is the county seat of Monroe County. The city is situated on the Genesee River near its outlet to Lake Ontario, in the midst of the fruit and truck garden country of the picturesque Genesee Valley. It leads the world in the production of cameras and photographic supplies, optical instruments, recording devices, and related products. It ranks high in the manufacture of men's clothing, communications equipment, photocopy, and medical, surgical, automotive, and office equipment. Representatives of many local industries serve the College in an advisory capacity in order to coordinate the

College's program offerings with the employment needs of the community.

An important educational and cultural center, the Rochester area includes the University of Rochester, with its world-renowned Eastman School of Music, and Strong Memorial Hospital; Rochester Institute of Technology, and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf; Colgate-Rochester Divinity School-Bexley Hall-Crozer Theological Seminary; St. John Fisher College; Nazareth College; and Roberts Wesleyan College. The State University Colleges at Brockport and Geneseo are within commuting distance. The city is the home of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra; the nationally known Lilac Festival; the Strasenburgh Planetarium which is part of the Rochester Museum and Science Center; and the George Eastman House of Photography, a world center of collections and exhibits featuring the history and use of photography.

Rochester and the surrounding towns have a very diverse population, attracting people in engineering and the technologies, in medical-surgical and related healthcare, in music, photography, and the other arts. It also has a unique history that has inspired the development of the course we call "Common Ground in the Rochester/Genesee Region." One primary goal is to establish this course as a permanent offering within the Social Science Department. A second goal is to interest other faculty in teaching this course, or in developing other courses that explore "common ground", or in revising existing courses so that they include a "common ground" component.

During the fall semester the class heard four speakers: the Rochester Historian, Ruth Napersteck; the president of the New York State Canal Society, and Professor of Geology at Monroe Community

College, Thomas X. Grasso; a local historical fiction writer, Miriam Monfredo; and a newspaper reporter, and adjunct professor at Monroe Community College, Douglas Mandalero. This first class was small enough to allow for a seminar atmosphere and much "conversation" between speakers as they presented their material, as well as "conversation" student to student, and student to faculty. Students became aware of their own family histories, and were encouraged to explore the journeys that resulted in their settling in the Rochester/Genesee Valley region.

We encountered some obstacles as we prepared for this course. First, we were working in a short time frame, which meant limited publicity opportunities. Without a "track record" for a course, students have a tendency to overlook an offering. We found it difficult to identify it on the master schedule in an effective marketing manner. We also did not include the three faculty names on the master schedule as quickly as we should have. Flyers helped to publicize the course, and counselors involved in registration, along with the three faculty involved in the project who also worked in registration, improved our numbers.

Things left to be done are as follows:

First, we must keep the course in the public eye. To this end, our new flyers have been printed and are posted around the buildings. Project faculty and others are encouraging students to take the course.

Second, we must interest more faculty in teaching the course, or in developing another "common ground" course. Some disciplines that seem to be likely prospects are sociology, geology, music, art, and theatre. We plan to pursue discussions with faculty in these areas.

Third, the transition from HMN (Humanities) to SOS (Social Science) in Fall, 1997 is in the process and will be accomplished in a timely fashion.

Student responses to the following four questions were gathered through an anonymous survey conducted during the last week of classes. They are as follows:

What does it mean to be an American?

Most of the students listed a love for freedom and liberty as very important, having discovered that some people, even in their own families, left wealth somewhere else to come to America. Many of the students spoke of a desire for togetherness, and recognized the strength we have **because** of our diversity, and the resulting exposure to different points of view. Many admired the hardiness of the early settlers and noted that hardiness continues to be an important factor within the American psyche.

What divides us?

Different religious beliefs and racial intolerance topped the list of divisive elements within our country. Various cultural/ethnic traditions, and socio-economic conditions (especially wealthy as well as poor "ghetto" living) ranked second and third. Political policies, moral attitudes, and hatred were also divisive elements listed.

What brings us together? / Common Ground?

The desire for liberty and freedom to make our own ways within societal bounds, was rated highest. Pride in our country, our neighborhoods, and in ourselves is something we share. This pride is resurfacing even in the poorer communities in the nation. The often elusive "pursuit of happiness" was sometimes

linked with materialism, but the sense that young Americans are beginning to reevaluate the desire for "things" seems to be emerging. The value of having less material wealth and more in the way of quality family time is becoming a serious consideration for many of our students. Other items of "common ground" listed were respect for traditional morals & values, understanding of people's differences, and honesty.

The faculty team working on this course were extremely pleased with the amount of information we covered and the methodology employed. The atmosphere in the classroom was stimulating. In fact, many of the students said that they looked forward to coming to this class. The final project was a great success. It was either a small group effort or an individual one in which the students could do a poster display, or an illustrated report, or a video/audio presentation relative to the Genesee Valley region, or their own ethnic roots in the region, or business/famous figures in the region. The project was presented at an evening seminar attended by the students, along with families and friends. Immediately after the seminar we enjoyed a pot-luck banquet of ethnic foods donated by the students and faculty.

Motlow State Community College
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A Tennessee Board of Regents Institution

PROGRESS REPORT

EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES

HONORS AMERICAN STUDIES

(1) Motlow State Community College, established in 1969, is a small, rural-based entity whose student body reflects the population of its service area in Middle Tennessee, a population comprised predominantly of Appalachian, Anglo-Saxon Protestants. In the fall of 1996, Motlow enrolled 3,160 credit students and 35 non-credit students. Our students' family backgrounds and values tend to reflect the sub-culture of the region, including a resistance to change.

(2) While Motlow College offers courses in U.S. History Survey, English Composition, and U.S. Literature Survey, through our Action Plan to enhance teaching and learning about American pluralism and identity, we wish to engender in our students an integration of continuity and change through their own unique cultural community. All too many of our students have a narrow world view coupled with an ignorance of the diversity and richness of their native culture.

The goal of the college is to introduce an understanding which goes beyond tolerance to achieve acceptance. Our Action Plan is to be accomplished by an integrated program of study which will investigate, through both oral and written literature and historical records, the diversity originally present in our cultural community. By looking to the past and seeing how values have been formed, we will assist students in dealing with change and the concomitant shift in values change often brings.

Our long-range goal is to produce an integrated Honors program which addresses, in an interdisciplinary fashion, the richness of our

cultural heritage and the skills necessary to adapt to and profit from change. The lessons learned from this process will be shared with the larger student body through a more integrated curriculum.

Our prototype team-taught course, HON 201 and 202, was taught this fall for the first time. The course operates from a syllabus which looks at change and value shifts in the past in order to develop sensitivity toward and acceptance of other cultures. Issues covered in the class address the traditions of the area served by the college while exploring the cultural and historical diversity of the region. In other words, the course reveals how the predominantly Appalachian culture of our region mirrors in the microcosm the macrocosm of the American experience. Students discover through the distinctiveness of their own heritage the commonality of the threads that bind them to the broader American culture as they examine the "Story of Family"--personal, regional, and national.

(3) This course has succeeded in raising the awareness of our students concerning the cultural richness and diversity of our Appalachian heritage. Students have become aware that their region is not a backwater but is now, and always has been, involved in the mainstream of historic and cultural events. This course has emphasized the racial and cultural diversity represented by the three groups present in our region to 1876--black, red, and white.

Students have been involved in special events outside the classroom as part of this experience. In September the group spent three days visiting the birthplace of Sequoyah, the Oconoluftee Cherokee village where traditional lifestyles are carried on, the museum of the Cherokee Nation, Cades Cove, Smokemont Pioneer Village, and the Walker Sisters' Cabin. In November the class took a one-day tour of Franklin Battlefield, site of the bloodiest close combat in the west during the War Between The States, and paid visits to the historic Carter House, Lotz House, and Carnton. In December students had the opportunity to tour the Shiloh Battlefield. Guest speakers visited the class twice:

Mr. Bill Rust, who demonstrated Appalachian Dulcimers, and Mr. Brent Lokey, who presented a slide show on the campaigns of Lt. General Nathan Bedford Forrest.

The entire class was closely involved in the Motlow College Storytelling Festival, both in attending performance sessions and in participating in a workshop on how to tell stories. The workshop proved particularly valuable when, at the end of the semester, students portrayed a person from the past to "tell the story" of their history. Many students chose to portray members of their own families.

Students read both historical and literary material for each class meeting, and lectures were presented on occasion. However, the focus of each session was a seminar approach which encouraged conversation about diversity, commonality, and the American identity.

(4) Overwhelmingly, our students have expressed satisfaction with this course, often describing it as the best of their college experience. Both the instructors and the students, however, have become aware of two specific obstacles to be overcome to ensure the continuing success of the course. The first impediment was the difficulty encountered early on in team-teaching two disciplines. The instructors have experimented with ways to meld their different teaching styles/approaches and to integrate their materials, and we are meeting with better success in this area. The second obstacle continues to be the vast amount of material to be covered in the course. Since the course is designed to articulate as would our survey courses in American Literature and American History in addition to covering specific Appalachian materials, both the volume of reading and the class time required for lecture and discussion are proving to be excessive. For this coming semester, the instructors have devised an approach which will allow for a general survey of each time period to be covered (preceded by a reading list for background), followed by a more in-depth study of Appalachian material in relation to this broader national picture. In the future, it may be necessary to convert this course to elective credit and allow it to

become a purer study of Appalachian literature and history alone, with the background (national context) provided by prerequisites or corequisites of American Literature and American History.

(5) The work remaining on our project is to sharpen the focus of the American Studies course as explained above. In addition, we will continue to work toward our long-range goal of an expanded, interdisciplinary Honors Program by broadening the membership base and overall faculty involvement of our Honors Committee. We also plan to enrich our regular curriculum with some of the interdisciplinary materials and approaches that have proven successful, and to share our experiences with interested middle school and high school instructors in our service area.

(6) One particular example will serve to illustrate the synergy this class has developed around the topic of what it means to be an American. Two of our students, Kenny Baker and Alan Lemons, chose to portray Civil War ancestors so as to "tell the story" of the history of that period. Kenny is from Alabama and Alan from Illinois. As the two began their research, they found that Kenny's ancestor had joined the 16th Alabama Infantry, Wood's Brigade, while Alan's forebear had served in the 49th Illinois, McClernand's Brigade. Further investigation revealed both ancestors' units had fought at Shiloh. At the suggestion of their professors, the two students undertook a careful study of the battle only to learn that their ancestors had literally confronted each other for two days during the battle. Needless to say, the entire class became keenly aware of issues which had once divided the nation and of how the country has been reunited. At the request of the class, a trip was organized during the Christmas vacation to visit Shiloh Battlefield.

In a less dramatic fashion the class has confronted male/female gender issues and issues arising from different backgrounds. Some of the class members have always lived in the area, with family roots reaching back to 1810; others have followed the modern American pattern of migration demanded by jobs, and a few are military dependents who

have lived all over the world. A frank admission and examination of this diversity within the context of the region they now all call home has led to a better understanding of American Commonality.

Dr. Michael Bradley, History Instructor
Ms. Jeannette Palmer, English Instructor
Dr. Mary McLemore, Dean of Liberal Arts

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE, BETHLEHEM, PA 18018

Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground

Progress Report
Sharon Gavin Levy
December 1996

My work on the AACC grant has focused primarily on two areas: coordinating the professional development presentations by Dr. Eleanor Tignor and Liza Fiol-Matta; and revising my English 151 - literature option- course and English 265G, African -American literature.

Professional Development

Dr. Eleanor Tignor conducted an all-day professional development presentation on Tuesday, October 22, 1996 on African-American literature. Faculty from the Arts and Science division as well as college administrative staff attended the workshop. Many faculty indicated this was one of the most beneficial professional development days held for English faculty. Dr. Tignor's presentation and handouts were excellent.

Liza Fiol-Matta, Dr. Tignor's colleague at LaGuardia, is scheduled to facilitate an all-day professional development workshop on Hispanic literature and culture Thursday, March 6, 1997, for Arts and Science faculty. I am coordinating this presentation with Dr. Fiol-Matta now to ensure that its format and content respond to the needs of our faculty.

Course Revisions Initiative

A major goal of this project is revising English 151 (literature option) to include more works by Native American, African-American, Hispanic-American and Asian-American writers, and revising English 265G, African-American Literature, to broaden understanding about what it means to be American. In both courses, changes were designed to initiate conversations about American pluralism and identity and to explore individual and collective commonalities and differences. To this end, I implemented the following:

<u>English 151</u>
I revised the English 151 course this fall semester, used a new textbook, and employed new instructional approaches with my students. I treated this semester as an experimental one because I wanted to "test" new strategies before sharing them with other faculty who teach the course. In previous semesters I taught the course by genre, but I felt I could best examine the concepts of plurality and identity if I taught literature by themes. Therefore, I divided the course into four major thematic topics: Initiation and identity; War, peace, freedom and justice; Love and relationships; and Family. Within each thematic subject, I assigned works by male and female

writers from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, I also included nonfiction (essays and speeches particularly), for the first time . The text, Legacies edited by Bogard and Schmidt, was very helpful because it's organized by themes and contains an extensive number of multi cultural works.

Throughout the semester I was able to integrate conversations around the issues of pluralism, American identity, commonalities and differences in the following ways:

1. Before discussing a particular work or theme, I asked students to talk in small groups about a specific subject or question. For example, I asked them to discuss "what it means to be an adult, what is a man or what is a woman " in preparation for works on initiation into adulthood. We talked about the "American dream" and its meaning to students in the class, individuals from different cultural groups and economic classes, and to individuals throughout this nation's history as we moved into our works related to peace and justice. This approach was used successfully throughout the semester.

2. The lecture by Michael Eric Dyson provided a wonderful opportunity for students to share their ideas about contemporary issues related to identity, inclusion, differences and isolation. I assigned several essays for students to read prior to Dr. Dyson's visit on October 17, 1996. Students were also given a writing assignment that required them to write an evaluative paper on the lecture and one essay. In addition, the class discussed at length the lecture, the issues raised, and their perspective and response to Dyson's thesis. Students raved about the Dyson lecture; many indicated it was the best lecture they had ever attended and others said it was the first time they had not fallen asleep during a lecture. This activity not only enhanced my endeavor to help students explore the concept of American pluralism and identity, but it also raised conversations around the issue of generational differences and commonalities.

Students responded favorably to this thematic approach to reading and discussing literature. Responses to the question "What is your reaction to reading and discussing literature thematically" included the following:

"Students can learn more about famous writers and while reading their works, they can find issues of their own lives seen by the author's character."

"I like how you split up the different themes (relationships, family, etc.). It really helped me understand how different stories of the same subject could be sometimes different/sometimes the same. I liked the discussions in class about the different themes. It really made me understand that people see the literature in a different way than I did."

"I found that reading and discussing literature thematically helps me to understand the commonalities of people and their situations. It also helped me focus on the theme of the story and cleared up some confusion."

"It really helped me out within my own lifestyle..."

The course's design and approach also facilitated conversations around American pluralism, American identity, and commonalities and divisions within society. Students were asked to respond to the question "How has work in this class changed your view about literature,specificallyy American literature, the American experience, and your American identity" and responses included the following:

"The literature we read helped me to realize even more the commonalities and differences in society....What I really enjoyed was finally getting to be taught some African-American literature..."

"Since I am not American, for me personally, almost all of the works were new issues about American society. Reading about literature helped me a lot to discover commonalities within American society."

"I think American literature is very diverse and that diversity reflects society."

"It has given me a different perspective on racial situations. I've definitely gained better insight on the problems that can occur between people of different cultures. It has also given me a greater respect of people of different ethnic backgrounds."

"Everyone sees things pretty much alike when it comes to family and relationships. Families in America are pretty much alike theses days."

"I have learned that there are a lot of problems, too many to list, in this world but an individual can make a difference in controlling his own world."

In summary, I am pleased with my initial endeavors to revise English 151. Student evaluations as well as my assessment of the quality of classroom discussion indicate that this approach can greatly enhance the course. The revisions implemented this fall not only facilitated the conversation on American pluralism and commonalities, but created a true sense of community among the students enrolled in the course. Once they began talking among themselves, that became their expectation. I observed as they shared ideas and ideals, questioned values, challenged points of view, sought consensus, and struggled to make meaning in their conversation; I applaud this learning environment and will continue my work in this direction.

English 265G - African-American Literature

During the fall, my emphasis was on classroom discussions around the experience of African-American people in the United States. I focused on several major themes: the quest for freedom, the quest for equality, the quest for identity and visibility, and the quest for self-actualization. Since the literature in this course is written by African-American writers, I used the classroom conversations to explore the issues of commonalities and divisions. For example, the concept of equality for African-Americans was discussed in the context of equality for women and the Women's Rights movement; conversations around oppression and discrimination considered bias based up gender, and class as well as race; and the class examined societal influences on men and women from different racial and cultural backgrounds. Through this approach, students explored the literature in its historical, social and cultural context. Further, they were able to draw from their individual perspectives and experiences, and become more aware of the experience of African-Americans.

One assignment that was particularly effective required students to research an African-American writer's life and times, works, artistic experience, and reception by the public and critics. Students then shared their work through an oral presentation in class. Students gained tremendous insight into the writer they studied and most used that individual as a frame of reference when discussing other writers and their works. This was an important experience because I observed students forming an important "connection" with their writer and his/her experiences.

Since one of the course goals is for students to understand more fully African-American life, culture and literature and the values and viewpoints expressed in the literature, students were asked to discuss new insights about African-American people and American literature, the American experience and their American identity on the final exam. Some of their responses follow:

> " I have learned that there is a huge body of work that I have not been exposed to, nor just by African Americans, but the books I chose for myself to read before and the books I will choose in the future are different now. There is so much to learn about America and its different people and why people are the way they are; I have a lot to accomplish."
>
> "I can actually say that this class has had an effect on the way I look at things, both culturally, socially and historically."
>
> "By studying African-American literature a person can learn about the culture and experience of African-Americans. There are enormous racial and gender divisions within this country, however there are also commonalities. By reading African-American literature this semester I learned about their rich heritage. If I could choose three words to describe the impression I got for the material we read they would be: strength, determination and love...."

"My view of American literature has changed...My view of the American experience has been expanded by this course. As far as my American identity goes, I think I am lucky to be a part of a great melting pot that has so many beautifully different parts."

In spring 1997, I will revise the English 265G course syllabus. The goal is to identify works that can be used to supplement the course texts so conversations around American pluralism and identity can be expanded.

AACC\EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES Project: Progress Report

American Literature I Survey Course
Taught by: Dr. Len Roberts
Northampton Community College
Bethlehem, PA 18017

Following are some of the specific activities used to incorporate multicultural literature into the American Literature I course:

1. SYLLABUS: many multicultural works were newly incorporated into the American Literature I syllabus, including the following works:

CREATION OF THE WHITES (Yuchi)

Christopher Columbus, *from* JOURNAL OF THE FIRST VOYAGE TO AMERICA, 1492-1493

Samuel de Champlain, *from* THE VOYAGES TO THE GREAT RIVER ST. LAWRENCE, 1608-1612: AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE IROQUOIS; *from* THE VOYAGES OF 1615: CHAMPLAIN, AMONG THE HURON, LOST IN THE WOODS

Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, *from* RELATION OF ALVAR NUNEZ CABEZA DE VACA: CHAPTER VII, CHAPTER VIII, CHAPTER X, CHAPTER XI

John Smith, *from* CHAPTER 2: SMITH AS CAPTIVE AT THE COURT OF POWHATAN IN 1608

Mary White Rowlandson, *from* A NARRATIVE OF THE CAPTIVITY AND RESTAURATION OF MRS. MARY ROWLANDSON (Removes 1, 2, 3, and 20)

Handsome Lake (Seneca), HOW AMERICA WAS DISCOVERED

John Smith, *from* A DESCRIPTION OF NEW ENGLAND

Don Antonio de Otermin, LETTER ON THE PUEBLO REVOLT OF 1680

THE COMING OF THE SPANISH AND THE PUEBLO REVOLT (Hopi)

J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *from* LETTER III: WHAT IS AN AMERICAN?

Thomas Jefferson, *from* QUERY XVIII: MANNERS...THE EFFECT OF SLAVERY

(continued)

Benjamin Franklin, REMARKS CONCERNING THE SAVAGES OF NORTH AMERICA; ON THE SLAVE-TRADE

Olaudah Equiano, *from* THE INTERESTING NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF OLAUDAH EQUIANO, OR GUSTAVUS VASSA, THE AFRICAN, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF (Chapters 1 and 2)

Frederick Douglass, NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AN AMERICAN SLAVE

Part three of the course outline for American Literature I was also rewritten to incorporate the newly included multicultural perspective, as follows:

3.) Trace and discuss cultural and historical ideas inherent in the literature studied, including the contrasting perspectives of Native Americans and the New World settlers; the development of the New Adam in the New World; the emergence of materialism in the Enlightenment Period, and a subsequent rationale for slavery; the role of slavery and the Abolitionist movement in an expanding country; the re-emergence of the New Adam in the Romantic period, among others.

2. BIBLIOGRAPHY WHICH INCLUDES MANY MULTICULTURAL SECONDARY SOURCES FOR AMERICAN LITERATURE I (see attached). This bibliography includes the following sections:

a. General: Re-Evaluations of the American Literature "Canon"

b. General: Critical Works about the Puritan Period and Its Writers

c. General: Critical Works about the Englightenment Period and Its Writers

d. General: Critical Works about the Romantic Period and Its Writers

e. General: Critical Works about Native American Writers

f. General: Critical Works about Latino American Writers

g. General: Critical Works about Afro-American Writers

h. Individual Writers: Critical Works about Individual Writers

(continued)

3. MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMS (see attached): in addition to including quotations from multicultural works to be identified, exams also included essay questions which questioned students' knowledge of the inter-relationships of works both within and without the "Canon," as is demonstrated in the following essay questions:

a. Choosing four representative texts, one Native American, one Spanish, one English (Puritan), and another English (Enlightenment), compare and contrast the religious, political, and cultural values they reflect. Be sure to consider the individual text's evaluation of such topics as God, nature, and man, where applicable.

b. Compare and contrast the cultural purposes and literary styles (including genre choice) of the following: 1.) a Native American tale (which could include the Hopi account of "The Coming of the Spanish and the Pueblo Revolt"; 2.) Mary Rowlandson's "A Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson"; 3.) Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"; and 4.) Benjamin Franklin's THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY. Be sure to consider *why* these works were written, and to note why the authors selected the specific genre (type of literature) they did.

c. Please discuss the similarities and dissimilarities between Benjamin Franklin's AUTOBIOGRAPHY and Frederick Douglass's NARRATIVE, being sure to mention the writers' attitudes toward self, nature, society, and God.

4. HANDOUT: SOME POSSIBLE PAPER TOPICS FOR AMERICAN LITERATURE I. Many of these topics encourage the students to draw relationships between works produced by various multicultural groups (see attached). Two examples will demonstrate:

a. Choose FOUR of the following, and compare and contrast the perspectives they offer on what Christianity has meant to different peoples at particular historical moments. Be as *specific* as possible in your references to the relevant texts: Hopi; Yuchi; Carlos Jose Delgado; Mary Rowlandson; Cotton Mather; Jonathan Edwards; Don Antonio de Otermin; Olaudah Equiano/Gustavas Vassa; Samson Occum; Chief Seattle; Thomas Jefferson; Frederick Douglass.

b. Images of the New World. Itemize the images used by Columbus, Cabeza de Vaca, and John Smith as they attempt to characterize the New World for their European readers. Think critically about ways the images might have influenced

(continued)

a reader. Write a brief paper, about three pages, that addresses this question: Do Columbus, de Vaca, and Smith use images to present reliable descriptions or to manipulate readers?

5. MIDTERM TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT MEANT TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS' DIALOGUE ABOUT THEIR MULTICULTURAL READINGS WITH THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS. (PLEASE SEE ATTACHED RESPONSES.)

Now that you have read various accounts of slavery (as in Olaudah Equiano, Frederick Douglass, and Thomas Jefferson) please ask your family members and/or friends what they think about the issue of slavery. After recording their comments, evaluate them and try to determine whether they represent a Puritan, Englightenment, or Romantic view, according to the general characteristics of each age as discussed in class.

6. END-OF-SEMESTER TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT MEANT TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO EVALUATE WHETHER OR NOT THE AMERICAN LITERATURE I COURSE CHANGED THEIR VIEW ABOUT AMERICAN LITERATURE, THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, AND THEIR AMERICAN IDENTITY. (PLEASE SEE ATTACHED RESPONSES.)

How has the work in this course, such as readings, writing assignments, or class discussion, changed your view about American literature, the American experience, and your American identity? (Please address all three sub-tocpics.)

For example, have any of the works presented this semester helped you to discover, or become more aware of, commonalities and/or divisions within our society? If yes, how have such discoveries shaped your new view of what it means to be an American?

7. ONE IN-CLASS METHOD FOR TEACHING COMMONALITIES BETWEEN WORKS FROM VARIOUS CULTURAL GROUPS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE I. (PLEASE SEE ATTACHED RESPONSES.)

8. SUMMARY OF STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE MULTICULTURAL WORKS OF LITERATURE INCLUDED IN AMERICAN LITERATURE I.

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EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES:
IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

Nunez Community College was established in St. Bernard Parish by the Louisiana legislature in 1992 as an open admission college. The College is located in a suburban area seven miles from the New Orleans Central Business District.

The racial composition of Nunez students is 84 percent white, 10 percent black, 1.6 percent Asian, 1 percent American Indian, and 2.6 percent Hispanic. This racial composition is more diversified than the population of St. Bernard Parish itself. As a result of Nunez's participation in the Louisiana Alliance for Minority Participation (LAMP) grant sponsored by the National Science Foundation and recruiting efforts, it is anticipated that minority enrollment will continue to increase.

Among the many cultures represented at Nunez are the Islenos, former Canary Islanders who migrated to the region in search of freedom; and the Acadians (Cajuns). More recently a great number of Asian-Americans have settled in this area. The predominately African-American lower Ninth Ward of Orleans Parish is also part of the College's service area.

The Action Plan for Nunez Community College was finalized at the conference in Los Angeles in March 1996 by team members Dr. Carol Jeandron, Charles Morton, and Barry Pike with the

assistance of mentor Dr. Max Reichard. The goal centered on providing the Nunez Community College community with opportunities to learn of the cultural diversity which exists in its midst and the commonalities which bind the people of all the diverse cultures together.

One objective established to accomplish this goal was to incorporate more emphasis on cultural diversity in existing courses. A second objective related to providing opportunities for Nunez Community College students to be exposed to various cultures by the scheduling of curriculum-related field trips and visits to a myriad of activities throughout the New Orleans Metropolitan Area. A third objective involved the inclusion of service-learning into the curriculum. Because of the cultural diversity of those in Nunez's service area, the existence of the service-learning component in selected courses would allow students and those in the community with whom they came in contact exposure to different cultures than their own.

In the months which followed, the team's pursuit of the project's goal was to take various forms. Much of what had been accomplished by the project's end was a direct result of acquiring early support from Dr. Carol Hopson, President; the Administration Council; the Academic Council; and the faculty of the Division of Arts and Sciences, who chose participation in this endeavor as a Divisional Goal for the 1996-97 academic year.

A Multicultural Advisory Committee was also established at the onset of the project. Members of the faculty, administration

and student body representing various cultures at Nunez volunteered to serve on the committee, whose tasks included recommending to the project team activities for implementation.

In the Fall 1996 semester, Cory Sparks, Instructor of History, joined the team. By the beginning of that semester, changes had already occurred as a result of Nunez's participation in the project. The Nunez Community College Catalog 1996-97 noted that service learning was an optional activity for students in sociology. Also, listed in the catalog was a new anthropology course "Human Evolution and Variation."

Also during that semester modifications to existing courses occurred. Courses in the humanities, history, and social sciences maximized the potential to accentuate the importance of pluralism in America through an exploration of multicultural themes. In Criminal Justice, for example, the focus was on the existence of a bifurcated Justice System which sets different standards of enforcement, adjudication, and punishment for different racial and ethnic groups.

In conjunction with modifications of the curriculum, team members worked with the library staff to begin identifying works of ethnic or pluralistic importance which would form the basis of a Multicultural Resource Collection. These works included books, magazines, journals, and audio-visual materials.

Project activities in the fall also centered around the initiation of service learning at Nunez. Sociology students had the option of performing service learning as part of the course activities. Students choosing this option worked in a variety of settings including battered women's clinics, elementary and

secondary schools, nursing homes, AIDS associations, hospitals, government offices, and mental health clinics. A reading of the journals, which were submitted by all students choosing the option of service learning, indicated that through these volunteer activities most students learned much about themselves and others. One student working with an AIDS association became a "buddy" to someone dying from the disease; the student later noted in his journal that the experience had changed his life forever.

The Multicultural Advisory Committee remained active throughout the semester. In its efforts to increase students' awareness of cultural diversity, the committee sponsored the festival "Exploring Louisiana's Cultures: An American Pie." Due to news media coverage, the festival became a community affair. One of the coordinators of the event stated that the festival's purpose was to show: "As diverse as we are, we are that similar."

To achieve that purpose, November 6th through the 15th, diners in the Nunez Cafe were treated to presentations which illustrated the diversity of the ethnic groups that comprise Louisiana. Each day featured a different Louisiana culture: Asian-American, African-American, Native American, Latin American, Cajun-French, Italian American, and St. Bernard Parish's own Canary Island (or "Islenos ") culture. The Culinary Department supplemented each day's events with a representative menu of the spotlighted culture's food. Activities were videotaped and will be preserved in the college's archives.

Throughout the endeavors connected with the project, mentor

Dr. Max Reichard provided assistance and encouragement to the team. This assistance took several forms including providing reading materials, concurring with plans regarding some activities, and "tactfully" suggesting the team reconsider others. His input and expertise were instrumental to Nunez's efforts. The team has appreciated his guidance and friendship.

At the end of the site visit in November, Dr. Reichard cautioned the team not to let the energy and vision invested in this project diminish. Thus, we look to the future and make plans which involve among other endeavors the continuation of the Multicultural Advisory Committee, the inclusion of service learning into other areas of the curriculum, the continued growth of the Multicultural Resource Collection in the library, and the implementation of planned field trips related to exposing students to diverse cultures.

We, the Nunez team connected with the project "Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground," realize there is yet much to be done. We ended our application to participate in this project with the following: "The long lasting benefits to students, communities, states, and country are inherent in this project. Nunez Community College would appreciate the opportunity of contributing to the success of such an important endeavor." We have seen first hand the benefits of this project. We have greatly appreciated the opportunity provided to Nunez Community College and its constituents to participate in such an important endeavor.

RANCHO SANTIAGO COLLEGE

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RANCHO SANTIAGO
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American Pluralism in Microcosm:

The City of Santa Ana as Text

John Nixon, Tom Osborne, and Angelina F. Veyna
Rancho Santiago College, Santa Ana, California

Rancho Santiago College

Rancho Santiago College (RSC) is located in the very culturally diverse community of Santa Ana, California. In fact, Santa Ana has one of the largest Latino populations in the state (about 75% of Santa Ana is Latino, mainly Mexican), and the nearby communities of Garden Grove and Westminster are home to a large Asian population, mainly Southeast Asian. Since 1915 when initially opened as an extension of Santa Ana High School, Rancho Santiago College has evolved into a comprehensive community college district serving a population of more than 400,000 residents of central Orange County. The multi-campus structure of the college provides an opportunity for approximately 2,000 classes to be offered each semester supporting Associate Degrees and Certificate programs.

As of Fall 1996 Rancho Santiago College now enrolls approximately 25,000 students in college credit programs and about 16,000 in non-credit education classes. The population attending Rancho Santiago's credit classes can be categorized as follows: 37% Euroamerican students, 34% Latino students, 18% Asian students, and 11% other ethnicites, as well as foreign students. The mission of Rancho Santiago College is to be a leader and partner in meeting the academic, cultural, and workforce development needs of a diverse community. RSC prepares students for transfer to baccalaureate-granting institutions, prepares students for employment and careers, and prepares students with competency in basic skills so they can pursue higher goals. RSC has demonstrated a strong commitment to diversity and in fact, stated among RSC's institutional goals, is a commitment towards providing a

positive learning environment that "welcomes, understands and embraces the cultural diversity of the [students'] community and the world." Multicultural courses in the social sciences, the humanities, and the arts have long been a tradition of Rancho Santiago College's curriculum.

Action Plan

To enhance teaching and learning about American pluralism and identity at our college, Rancho Santiago College's team developed a project entitled **American Pluralism in Microcosm: The City of Santa Ana as Text.** The major purpose of this project was to give students the opportunity to explore contemporary American pluralism and identity in the local setting of Santa Ana, the community immediately surrounding Rancho Santiago College. This project was viewed as an initial step for students to become introduced to our multicultural community in order to explore the concept of "common ground." By encountering and reflecting on these social phenomena in an urban microcosm of the country at large, it was expected that students would enhance their understanding of pluralism and identity at the national level. A second purpose was to provide students with a chance to learn experientially and cooperatively by visiting designated sites in Santa Ana in teams and reporting their findings to their classes.

The Rancho Santiago College Team consisted of John Nixon, Dean of Instruction and in this case, instructor of English Composition; and Tom Osborne and Angelina F. Veyna of RSC's History Department. Prof. Osborne first introduced the project last Spring Semester 1996 when he assigned his students in his U.S. History Honors Course to go out and explore Santa Ana. The students were instructed to especially address three questions:

1) What population/s are visible in Santa Ana?
2) How do they make use of physical space in Santa Ana? and
3) What kinds of cultural production are reflected in Santa Ana?

Students were sent out in teams and were to return and report their findings to their classmates. Prof. Osborne's application of the "City as Text" project was limited to a single classroom with less than 20 students. Students returned with creative projects such as thematic maps of Santa Ana, photographic

collages encompassing a specific theme such as religion or the arts, and videotapes showcasing Santa Ana's history and aspects of multiculturalism. After the presentation of the projects, classroom discussion centered on addressing the questions of what it mean to be an American, what divides us, and what commonalities bind us.

The objective this Fall Semester 1996 was to take the "City as Text" project and adapt it to two different classroom situations. The project was implemented in one English composition course instructed by John Nixon at RSC's Orange Campus, and across four Mexican American History classes taught by Angelina Veyna at the Santa Ana campus. In Prof. Veyna's Mexican American History classes, students were instructed to go out into Santa Ana and report back what they observed in regards to the use of space in the city, the people of Santa Ana, and the cultural diversity reflected throughout the city. Prof. Veyna first took her students through a series of observational exercises prior to actually sending them out into the community.

Students were instructed to first observe their classrooms and describe (in an individually written essay) how students situated themselves physically and culturally, and describe how the classroom reflected the culture or cultures represented by the students. Secondly, students were instructed to walk the Santa Ana campus and describe (in a another essay) how space was used by the students, describe the people they saw, and to describe how different cultures were reflected or interacted with each other. Having realized in both exercises that people tended to segregate themselves culturally, they were assigned into teams by Prof. Veyna and told to suggest ideas for improving multicultural relations. Students came up with ideas such as multicultural fairs, the development of new courses addressing the various cultures present on campus, the development of student cultural retreats off campus, and the development of multicultural clubs.

The fourth step in Prof. Veyna's classes were the actual observations of Santa Ana. Whereas in the third exercise students were assigned into teams by the instructor, for the actual city observation, students were allowed to divide themselves as they wished and felt comfortable. Students in all four Mexican American History classes (a total of about 160 students) were sent out to explore Santa Ana.
Several weeks later, students returned to their classrooms ready to share videos in which they interviewed

different community members and in which they showcased different geographic sectors of Santa Ana. Other videos focussed on a single theme such as "religions in Santa Ana" and shared excerpts of different religious services, while other students documented their own "discovery" of another culture's community. Other students developed collages presented on poster boards displaying thematic maps of Santa Ana, comparing photographs of Santa Ana's historic past with the present, or comparing and contrasting different cultural restaurants in the city. Yet other students delivered formal presentations, using slides, of how identity was reflected throughout the community. One positive outcome of the City as Text project was that students who normally would be too shy to deliver an oral presentation before class, were able to find themselves sufficiently comfortable in this classroom context to actually do the talking or to at least stand with team members before the classroom.

The third participant in the project, John Nixon, implemented the "City as Text" curriculum in a section of Freshman Composition during the Fall '96 semester. Working with twenty-eight students, Prof. Nixon modified slightly the original curriculum to allow for individuals and groups to take the assignment and to allow individuals and groups to investigate any local city and not just Santa Ana. The students enthusiastically conducted their investigations and reported orally and in writing that they experienced people, places, and events that they had never encountered before. The majority of the students in this class were European Americans who had little or no experience with Latino or Asian cultures, which predominate in Santa Ana. Students conveyed how much they appreciated the opportunity to explore areas and arenas they had never sought on their own.

All three team leaders gathered their students' impressions of this project. Students in all courses shared how exciting it was to learn a subject matter unders different and exciting circumstances. Other students conveyed that they appreciated the opportunity to explore and learn about other cultures and appreciated the opportunity to compare and contrast their own culture with that of others. Some students mentioned that it was great to work in teams in order to meet new people and develop new friendships, and as a result of this project, tended to feel less inhibited and more comfortable greeting students from other cultures in their classrooms and on campus. Unfortunately, our local media often focusses on the negative aspects of Santa Ana, thus several students mentioned their discovery of a "different" Santa Ana

from that reported by the media, they discovered that their city reflected many positive attributes. Some students noted that as a result of exploring "their" city, that they now felt a reponsibility towards contributing to their community. Other students noted that the City as Text project has propelled them to undertake actions they have never engaged in, e.g., increased visits to their community libraries and developing research about their city's history. Teachers on campus also commented to team members that they had heard from students about their exciting learning experience. Students who participated in the City as Text Project strongly suggested that it continue to be incorporated into future classes; as one student put it: "This Santa Ana project was a success. It was a great learning experience and also amusing. I believe this project is a vital tool for learning and getting students involved in learning about the community that surrounds our campus."

As we developed the project on campus, the Rancho Santiago College Team received the full support of the college chancellor. In fact, she was present in Prof. Osborne's Honors History course when his students presented their projects last Spring Semester '96 as well as in Prof. Veyna's Mexican American history classes this Fall Semester. It should also be noted that the positive collaboration of RSC team members and their personal commitment to student success helped to make this project a a rewarding experience.

The Future for the "City as Text" Project

All three team instructors definitely want to continue incorporating the project into their classroom. Also, students will probably be encouraged to explore not only Santa Ana but also other communities from which our students derive. There are no reservations with regards to the success of the program. An overwhelming 95% of the students involved suggested that the project be continued in classes this next semester. Future plans include both short term and long term goals. Writing a comprehensive report about the project is one immediate goal and sharing it with colleagues from other campuses is another. Prof. Osborne, Prof. Veyna and several students who participated in the City as Text project will be making a presentation in May 1977 in San Diego at the Annual Conference of the Western Regional Honors Council whose conference theme is very apropos of this project: "Pacific Destiny:

Beyond Borders, Boundaries, Limits." Prof. Osborne and Prof. Veyna are also planning to share the City as Text project with RSC colleagues through the Professional Development Program next August. The RSC team also plans to explore new avenues of funding to develop projects that can build on the City as Text project, for example, a program whereby students conduct oral histories of community members in order to develop an oral history archive, perhaps on our campus. Of course, the City as Text project will continue to be adapted into our team's future courses.

Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground

As we explored the concept of what it means to be an American, it became apparent that a certain level of consciousnes-raising needed to be done. Our students, as many of us, are so overwhelmed by life's daily activities that we often don't take the time to meditate and reflect on our country and on what it means to be an American. For this reason, the City as Text project as applied in all three courses was meant to raise students' consciousness regarding their social and cultural relationships to their college peers and their community. The attempt was made to develop students' observational skills so that they in turn would assess how and where they fit into their community and into American society at large.

To many of the City as Text students, an overwhelming portion of whom are themselves immigrants or came from immigrant families, the feeling was that by knowing one's cultural background, it serves as a foundation for learning about other cultures. Once students realized how divided they situated themselves in the classroom and on campus, they then became more excited about trying to develop ideas to improve those multicultural relations. Unfortunately, RSC team members cannot report that students immediately and totally became integrated in the classrooms or on their campus, but awareness about their commonalities was heightened and the creation of a "safe" environment in which to cross cultural boundaries was initiated.

The cities served by Rancho Santiago college serve as a "common ground" for immigrants (as is the case in our classrooms and campus.) These cities serve as a magnet for Latino immigrants, for Asian immigrants, and for immigrants of many other countries. Thus the common experience of leaving a homeland, experiencing the actual migration process--sometimes under enormous and tumultuous

circumstances, and having to adapt to a dominant culture is a common experience shared by many of Orange County's residents and students, as well as an enormous portion of our American society.

"Common ground" is what many of Santa Ana's residents and Rancho Santiago College students are striving for as they try to learn English, try to educate themselves, and attempt to acquire the "American Dream" As the students themselves stated in some of their papers: "What we have in common is that we all want to live in America and we all want to succeed in America." A few years back, Prof. Osborne, one of our RSC team members, suggested that Rancho Santiago College enhance its identity by adopting a new motto: RSC: A Diverse Learning Community. This City as Text project has certainly allowed us to give credence to this motto. This project has also undoubtedly helped us to enhance and make more exciting our teaching approaches. Most of all, this project has allowed us to work towards improving multicultural relations on our campus as we continue to search for that "Common Ground."

PROGRESS REPORT ON 'AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES' AACC GRANT
ROCKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Team: Libby Bay, Beverly Brown, Directors
Eugenio Espinosa, Sylvia Miranda

Participating Faculty: Sue Commanday, Suzanne Cleary-Langley, Karen McGovern, Reamy Jansen, Colin Faulds, Don O'Reilly, Carolina Sosa, Al Prettyman, Elaine Padilla, Steve Drinane, Luis Ramos

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Preface

Aside from the concrete results described in this report, the greatest benefit of our participation in the AACC "America's Communities" project has been the opportunity for Rockland Community College participants to carve out time from the dispiriting discussions of dropping enrollment, budget constriction and dwindling resources to engage each other in an exploration of critical intellectual, curricular and pedagogical issues.

Through the cooperation of our administration, the team was able to enlist eleven other faculty members to meet with some regularity to discuss, argue, read and workshop together to plan and plot how to best integrate a sense of America's diversity and America's common ground into campus life. We explored issues of voice, identity, community, language, and read THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET by Sandra Cisneros, "Our Next Race Question," Harper's (April 1996), as well as articles on Cuba and the mambo, in order to share various approaches to using such sources in our classrooms. We invited a consultant recommended by our mentor to present two workshops for the project participants and students during the year; we met with students in the Hispanic Club to hear their views on the possibility of Latino/a studies; we participated in an evening of poetry during Spanish Heritage Month. Mostly we talked as colleagues about matters that really count and made plans for the continuation of this dialogue among faculty and students.

We thank the American Association of Community Colleges, particularly Dr. Eleanor Tignor, our mentor, and the Rockland Community College administration, especially Dr. Neal A. Raisman, Dr. Gail Mellow, and Dr. Robert Kahn for pointing us in this direction and for supporting our activities.

Introduction

Rockland Community College, located 35 miles northwest of Manhattan in the suburban town of Suffern, New York, enrolls approximately 6,400 credit students and 4,571 non credit registrations. Since its founding in 1959, the College has grown from its original location in the former county almshouse to a main campus and five extension sites. As the county's population has changed and moved towards more urban demographics, the College has recruited and enrolled significant numbers of minority students and is now truly a multicultural community: 17.9% African American and Haitian, 8.8% Latino/a, 6.1% Asian/Pacific Islander, .4% Native American, 2.2% International Students.

Action Plan

Rockland Community College began a serious engagement with the challenges of pluralism and diversity in 1990. In that year, the President of the College appointed a Task Force on College Pluralism and Diversity. After many months of study, the Task Force made a number of significant recommendations which were adopted as College policy, including a mandated core course in Pluralism and Diversity in America as a graduation requirement. In order to sustain this promising start, the primary goals of our action plan have included a series of activities to review and revise our courses in American history and American literature and to develop a new inter-disciplinary, team-taught course in Latino/a culture. We decided that inclusion of as many faculty as possible was crucial and were able to enlist an additional eleven faculty participants. Thus we were able to divide into subcommittees as well as to work as a committee of the whole.

Accomplishments

In the past year we have been able to reach the goals we established. Attached to this report are copies of our revised Learning Activity Proposals and a new course proposal for an interdisciplinary team taught course on Latino/a Studies. We also, serendipitously, alighted on the idea of an American Studies Learning Community and have made rather thorough plans for initiating a pilot plan in Spring '97.

Our meetings were intensive, task-oriented, and accomplished, our main goals. The two visits of Dr.Liza Fiol-Matta were extremely helpful. During the firstpresentation, she described various aspects of U.S. Latino/a culture; she illustrated her ideas with readings and analyses of modern Latin American literature. Students from a Pluralism and

Diversity in America section also joined us. During her second visit, she critiqued the first draft of our proposed Latino/a course and also reviewed our revised L.A.P. Dr. Eleanor Tignor's visit to campus on November 1, 1996 was far more than a mere formality. She was particularly helpful in clarifying the benefits and problems of erecting and maintaining a Multidisciplinary Learning Community.

Our colloquium on The House on Mango Street sparked sharp discussion about the aesthetic quality of the book and the necessity of approaching new voices in new ways. As one participant noted, "Cisneros, as a feminist and Latina, is interested in portraying community rather than individual" and "thus challenges Western notions of identity.

In October, Rockland Community College served as a local host for the national, live, call-in video teleconference on renewing America's civic life, "From Me to We," and a number of project participants attended the showing. Although they felt that the teleconference was not directly relevant to our curricular development project, they did find the discussion of civic responsibility to be challenging and informative.

None of our activities have yet reached the classroom, although the concept of "conversation" has permeated our meetings. In our revised American literature and history sequences as well as in the new interdisciplinary course, we have projected the idea of seminar, dialogue, small work groups as ways of integrating conversation and building trust. We are developing learning activities that prompt students to confront controversial issues about American pluralism and identity and to discover common meeting ground.

Obstacles

We are uncertain what obstacles we will face in Spring 1998 when we plan to offer the U.S. Latino/a course. We anticipate problems with team-teaching if our budget situation does not improve. We will also be facing serious competition from other multicultural courses that attract students, and hence we will have to develop an energetic recruitment strategy.

The Learning Community which is being offered in Spring 1997 is, at the moment, facing the problem of low enrollment. What were first conceived as possible obstacles to the American Studies Learning Community -- lack of faculty interest and administrative support -- never materialized. So many faculty waited to participate in The Learning Community that we had to develop a process of selection. Also the registrar's office was totally cooperative in developing block scheduling and providing an appropriate

mailing list. The graphics division even designed special return postcards for our mailing. But what we did not recognize was the difficulty of recruiting sophomore level students for a three course, integrated program. Despite our concerted efforts at publicity -- both through a descriptive paragraph in the Spring course schedule and a mailing of 400 letters--we are finding it very difficult to recruit students into a core of 3 sophomore level classes and may have to modify the requirement to register for all three. We are now working on plans to offer less comprehensive coordination among the courses since not all students will be full participants.

Remaining Tasks

As noted above, we are working on modifying our overly ambitious plans for The Learning Community and developing strategies for offering the U.S. Latino/a course next year. We are planning a workshop during the faculty development month of June to share our projects with the total academic community at Rockland Community College. This will include a panel of participants, a media presentation, as well as a report of accomplishments to date. Our aim is to encourage more conversation about American pluralism and identity across campus.

We are also considering developing some of our ideas on the Latino/a course into modules for the required Pluralism and Diversity in America course and several of the accepted alternatives.

We are asking the American literature and history people who have worked with us to conduct workshops for faculty in their disciplines to review the revised Learning Activity Proposals Our object here is to ensure that all sections of the survey courses include pluralism and identity issues.

Finally, the Library is continuing to work closely with us to build a collection of books and videos on Latino/a studies and diversity issues.

Conclusion

The rich and varied composition of our Task Force added much to the ultimate construction of the courses we developed and revised as well as The Learning Community we created. Even our points of conflict were not so much obstacles as opportunities and were probably indicative of the exhilarating conversations that will permeate our classrooms when we address the question:

"What does it mean to be an American?"

An Addendum to Rockland Community College's Progress Report

1. "What does it mean to be American?"

Novelist Amy Tan, in a recent interview on National Public Radio, posited that the felt need to ask this question is quintessentially American. She suggests that this selfconscious questioning of nationality is what distinguishes the American. The Rockland Community College America's Communities committee agrees to the extent that we see the American as someone who traces her origins beyond the national boundaries of the United States and is thus aware of a hyphenated identity; eg. Irish American, African American. We are a "nation of immigrants," as the old textbooks say. Members of our committee agree that diversity is one of the hallmarks of the United States, and agree that, in theory if not practice, we share, under the Constitution, the right to our own individuality, to "equal recognition" (Prettyman xi).

We also considered some values traditionally identified as "American," such as individualism (as opposed to focus on community), patriarchy (as opposed to matriarchy), seeking out the new (as opposed to the customary), youth (as opposed to age); we might also add valuing the rural (as opposed to the urban). We noted that this traditional list is not indicative of the diversity that has been a vital part of the United States since (and before) its inception. The traditional image of "American" is accurate for only a fraction of the population--which is one of the reasons for the development of the field of American Studies, which labors to define "American" in all its many manifestations. Our committee suggests that this list would be more accurate if it includes also those values in parenthesis, which indicate values held dear by many Americans.

2. "What divides us?"

The answers to this question come far more readily: race, ethnicity class (economic and social), sex, gender, education, language (including the notion of close discourse communities), age, politics, religion (including "religious" vs. "non-religious"), region, geography, anger, distrust, fear.

3. "What brings us together?"

This can be answered by repeating the items listed immediately above. Americans seem to most often identify themselves with some sub-set of the general set "American," except perhaps in times of war or other national crises. We don't make our primary identifications with those who look, act, or think differently than we do, which is one of the great challenges that we, as a country, face--that we, as teachers, face. Academe's current interest in pluralism procedes from the recognition that we need to develop our students'--and our own--capacity to interact with "Other" people, and to develop their--and our own--ability to draw connections between diverse subjects. On a more literal, but equally profound, level, our classrooms are meant to impress upon the student the fact that she is responsible to her classmate (as well as to her instructor) in the community that is the campus. (Levine n.p.). One of the lessons education is that knowledge is not a privately held commodity but, rather, a shared wealth. Put another way, knowledge is process, not product. As the medieval visionary Mechtild of Magdeburg wrote, criticizing a certain population of self-satisfied clerics, "Stupidity is sufficient unto itself. Wisdom can never learn enough" (Norris 160).

4. "What do we have in common?"

To expand upon question #1, we would add that we achieve some measure of community through public education, national holidays, place of worship, military service, sporting events. At its worst, however, this feeds into the emerging orthodoxy of "civility," wherein, as Benjamin DeMott has noted, "the leader classes...still any insurgence in a second" (18). The discourse of civility encourages people to focus on changing rude behavior, lest they address the underlying injustice(s) that make people loath to "listen and respect and defer" (DeMott 11). Although members of our committee will certainly want to explore this question in our classrooms, we will do so with the awareness that when a discussion of "women's" issues concludes with vague generalizations about their "universal" nature, our students may justifiably conclude that a discussion about women is not complete until it addresses men. Likewise, we must be wary of drawing hasty, facile conclusions about cross-cultural commonalities, lest we send our students the message that differences: 1) do not exist; 2) do not matter.

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San Antonio College
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PROGRESS REPORT

San Antonio College is an urban campus offering academic, occupational/technical,and continuing education courses. It serves a student population which is 50.5% Hispanic, 41.3% white, 4.3% black, and 3.8% other, a total of, 21,376 credit students and approximately 15,000 non-credit students. Established in 1925, San Antonio College is the largest single-campus community college in Texas and one of the largest in the United States. The college is a public community college which provides for and supports the educational and lifelong learning needs of a multi-cultural community. As a leader in education, San Antonio College is committed to excellence in helping students reach their full potential by developing their academic competencies, critical thinking skills, communication proficiency, civic responsibility and global awareness.

The college's plan to enhance teaching and learning about American pluralism and identity is to offer a new course

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beginning in the Spring of 1997 entitled American Pluralism and Identity. This team-taught course will explore common American values as they are expressed in the following San Antonio/South Texas ethnic communities: German-American, African-American, and Mexican-American. Students will explore the sociology, the historical development,and the literary expression of American values. Field trips and guest speakers will be an integral part of the course's requirements. This course will reflect the college's mission of responding to the educational needs of a diverse population.

Thus far the following goals have been met:

1. Selected the faculty (Dawn Elmore-McCrary, English; Nora McMillan, History; Clyde Hudgins, Sociology);
2. Written a comprehensive syllabus that includes novels, sociological readings, historical documents and classroom activities that represent the three ethnic groups;
3. Recruited guest speakers David McDonald, director of the Navarro House Historical Site; Walter Schumann German Interpretive Guide;
4. Arranged field trips to San Antonio Public Library, New Braunfels historical district, and Institute of Texan Cultures;
5. Received approval for the new course from the coordinating board and the Academic Council of San Antonio College;

6. Listed the course in the Spring 1997 Schedule;

7. Created a colloquium on American pluralism and identity featuring speakers from a variety of ethnic groups to round out the ethnic diversity of the course.

We encountered difficulties in two primary areas: student recruitment and faculty inertia. Despite the fact that several methods of recruitment were utilized, including articles in the student newspaper, a notice in the faculty bulletin, memos to colleagues, and flyers posted throughout the campus, to date an insufficient number of students have enrolled in the course in order for it to make this Spring semester. Recruitment for the course in still ongoing.

While we have experienced great cooperation from the college administration, we have encountered some resistance at the faculty level which we interpret as being reluctance to change. Questions arose as to the proper designation of the course (humanities or interdisciplinary studies), which department would take responsibility for scheduling the course, and whether the course would transfer to upper-level institutions. While all of the problems have been resolved, each created political tensions which took time and effort which could have been devoted to the course development.

At this point continuing student recruitment, final approval of the San Antonio College Board of Trustees, and articulation with the University of Texas at San Antonio still remain to be

completed. We plan to complete all these tasks by the middle of the Spring semester.

Because the course has not yet been taught, we have been unable to compile student response; however, initial student response to the crucial questions about American pluralism and identity will be available for the conference in New Orleans, assuming we get sufficient enrollment.

The three faculty members who have been working on the project have spent much time focusing on questions of American pluralism and identity and have come to several conclusions. First, while there is clear evidence of strong commitment to the values of family, education, self-determination, community, work, and spirituality, among Americans, there is great diversity in the expression of these values among various ethnic groups. Next, we are divided by the inability to perceive that these values can be expressed in different ways in different communities. We have found that these questions to be more problematic and critical that was first imagined. It is hoped that we will be able to communicate the importance of these questions to the students and that we can all work together throughout the semester to reach some firm conclusions.

PROGRESS REPORT
American Cultures Project
SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE

Established in 1918, Santa Rosa Junior College is a large, single-campus but multi-site, public community college located 52 miles north of San Francisco in Sonoma County, California. The college attracts more than 30,000 students each semester (nearly 18,000 fulltime equivalent students), of whom 84% are enrolled for credit, 16% noncredit. Ethnically, 76% of the students are white, with the next-largest group being Hispanic (12%), and smaller but noticeable percentages of blacks, Asian-Americans, Native Americans, and international students. Student ages range from the mid-teens to the seventies (the average is 28), with the majority of fulltime day students being 18-28 years old. Because the county remains largely rural and agricultural, the SRJC offers classes at various outlying locations; but the main campus in Santa Rosa offers a comprehensive program in general and vocational education, mostly to drive-in, suburban students. The college has maintained strong community ties for many years, centering on the artistic and intellectual life of the Santa Rosa area, through its performing arts programs, planetarium, Native American museum, and art gallery, as well as its athletic programs. Though student ethnic groups such as M.E.Ch.A. and the Black Student Union have remained fairly active in recent years, college ties to community ethnic groups are limited.

While it was felt that over the years SRJC had done much in the way of multicultural education—in staff development opportunities, in curriculum, and in events open to the campus and community—there was nevertheless a need for greater focus, and for sustained attention over time. The American Cultures Project of 1996 was designed to do the following:

- Provide an ongoing forum where the various humanities disciplines can present their differing perspectives on important aspects of American culture, and where both students and faculty have an opportunity to formulate a holistic view of American culture;
- Initiate a college-wide conversation on American values and culture;
- Support the promotion, enrichment, and refinement of our Humanities offerings;
- Provide means and inspiration for faculty to develop courses to fulfill the proposed Intercultural Degree Requirement (now to be called the American Cultures requirement).

To accomplish these things, we have worked to create a new, ongoing program, the American Cultures Program, composed initially of three parts: (1) a public lecture series, or "American Cultures Forum," (2) a learning-community course devoted to some aspect of American culture, and (3) a faculty study group. A fourth planned component, service learning, was seen early on to be something we might not be able to set up right away.

To date, much has been accomplished, but the effects of many of our efforts remain to be seen. Much of the work during 1996 has been planning and preparation for the lecture series, which will experience its inaugural semester in Spring '97. Seven lectures (nine total events) are scheduled to be held in the college's 200-seat auditorium, and these are being advertised via the printed Schedule of Classes and flyers to be distributed in January. A one-unit course has been set up for the lecture series, allowing students to get credit for attending the events and the discussion sessions organized around them. The overall theme for the semester is "E Pluribus Unum: Cultural Diversity and American Identity," and topics for the lectures and events are currently set as follows:

Soul Music: From Plato to Motown (An Exploration of "Formalism" and the "Devil's Music")

Evolution of the Blues Concert

Edwin Hawkins Gospel Singers

Entangled Lives: Facing Our Slaveholding Past

Feminist Theater: The History of Women's Theater in America

Landscape and Inscape: The Invention of American Culture

Crossing Cultures in Film

Panel: The Question of American Identity

This series has been planned by a steering committee representing faculty, staff and students from across the disciplines, and presenters include SRJC faculty as well as visiting experts.

The learning community course, "Declarations of Independence: Culture and Conflict in the Formation of American Identity," was offered for the first time in Fall '96. It enrolled quickly, and students in the class report having a very valuable experience. The course combines credit for English 1A (Reading and Composition) and History 21 (Race, Ethnicity and Gender in American Culture), and students have engaged in thorough discussions and writing projects centered on American pluralism. For them, the fall semester has truly included an in-depth "American conversation." As we head into Spring '97, we will have our first opportunity to implement the link between this course and the public

lecture series: the learning community students will be required to attend all lectures, thus providing a well-prepared core audience. It remains to be seen whether this feature of our plan will provide the sustained focus we hope for.

The faculty study group has now met three times, beginning is work by reading and discussing David Hollinger's *PostEthnic America* and several essays by James Baldwin, focussing on Baldwin's perspective on American identity as an African-American who lived in Europe for many years. Discussions have been exceedingly lively among the dozen or so members, who will continue to meet in the spring. Our plan and hope here, too, is that the study group will link up with the public lecture series—both by addressing issues that arise in that venue, and by discussions with visiting presenters. Another plan and hope for the study group is that it will address the challenges that arise in teaching aspects of American culture. While some of this kind of collegial discussion has occurred, much more can be done.

Thus, this project at SRJC has gotten a new program off to a fine start, but portions of the external "conversation" with community members and students remain to occur in the coming spring semester and beyond. Obstacles we have faced have included the following:

- a relative lack of start-up funds. We applied unsuccessfully for an NEH focus grant for Spring '97, to help us advertise, attract campus interest, and support coordination and curriculum development in connection with the college's proposed American Cultures degree requirement. We are moving ahead, but are having to scramble to pay for some aspects of the program.
- the inertia and uncertainty caused by having to work with various well-established constituencies and structures within the college. We have established ties with the Community Education/Arts and Lectures program, the Staff Development program, and other groups, but it has been slow going, and awkward. Over time, we feel that the understanding and cooperation of all these groups will constitute a great strength.
- a very impacted public performance space. Our 200-seat auditorium is an ideal, high-tech facility, but is very heavily used, and the competition particularly for noontime slots (crucial to our program) is intense.
- faculty time schedules. Holding meetings at times when many faculty can attend has been difficult.

In addition to continuing to overcome these obstacles, much remains to be done in the coming weeks and months. We need to begin seriously to consider implementing the

fourth part of our program design—service learning. Since this will likely require considerable institutional resources as well as significant liaison with the community, there is a lot of advance groundwork to be done. We hope to begin that work during Spring '97. And for the program at large, a permanent budget needs to be set up, and responsibility for administering it handed over to the new department chair or coordinator of Humanities/Interdisciplinary Studies in Fall '97. Indeed, in order to successfully institutionalize the program, we must see that the coordination needs are clearly defined and securely transferred to a strong advocate. We must immediately begin planning the year-long lecture series for 1997-98, and lining up another learning community course (or a repeat of the current one). It will also be important to consider in earnest how to include our Petaluma Center in the program. Most especially, we need to develop more extensive ties with students and community: (a) high school liaison, (b) more active involvement by our Associated Students and appropriate campus clubs, (c) awareness, involvement and support of community groups such as 100 Black Men and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. And finally, we need to continue to develop awareness and support within the faculty and staff at the college, so that the lecture series can truly become a "campus-wide forum."

The new American Cultures Program has attracted considerable interest at SRJC, and is becoming known as an emerging campus presence. (Students are now asking faculty members about it, for example, as they sign up for spring classes.) It will be important most of all to capitalize on that key accomplishment, and further its reach and inclusiveness.

As to how participants in our project have answered the questions, What does it mean to be an American? What brings us together? What do we have in common?, and so on, it is difficult to say with any completeness at this point. Members of the faculty study group have wrestled with the first question especially in the context of their readings, but have arrived at no clear consensus. Taking their discussions together with those in the learning community course and in the steering committee meetings, it is clear at least that we all tend to agree that we have our differences in common: that is, that the celebration of difference itself is now a very American and unifying element. Thus, the topics for the pilot semester of the lecture series emphasize celebration of American arts from different angles: blues, gospel, women's theater, etc. And yet there is also an emphasis on bringing ourselves together (the planned lecture on "Entangled Lives" is by two women, one a descendant of slaves and the other a descendant of their masters). And there is of course a posing of the question itself—

evidenced by the lecture on "Landscape and Inscape: The Invention of American Culture" and the panel on "The Question of American Identity." Answers to the question, What divides us?, are sketchy too at this point, though some among us have advanced the notion that class divides us more than race or ethnicity do.

We look forward with eagerness to the coming semesters, in which we expect to have a very active and focussed "conversation" on American pluralism and identity.

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PROGRESS REPORT
EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES: IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

Southeast Community College was established in 1960 as part of the University of Kentucky community college system. With campuses located at Cumberland, Whitesburg, and Middlesboro, Southeast Community College serves the predominantly rural population of Bell, Harlan, and Letcher counties in the coalfields of southeastern Kentucky. During the fall semester of 1996; 2,346 students were enrolled at Southeast Community College, of whom 1,632 were full-time and 714 were part-time. Southeast Community College also served approximately 1,635 people through the non-credit programs.

The primary goals of our college's Action Plan to enhance teaching and learning about American pluralism and identity at Southeast Community College have been:

(1) to introduce the project to the college's Institutional Advisory Board and faculty
(2) to plan and initiate the process of linking HIS 108/109 and SPI 101/102
(3) to secure institutional funding to support the project
(4) to identify and acquire library resources to support the project
(5) for the GE 140 (Development of Leadership) class to plan and conduct an essay competition among eighth grade students in the Bell County school systems devoted to the project themes
(6) to conduct Professional Development Workshops for the Southeast Community College faculty.

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Southeast Community College has been successful in accomplishing the majority of the goals stated in our Action Plan. Via e-mail and voice-mail Peggy Marcum disseminated information about the project to all faculty and staff at the Bell County campus of Southeast Community College and described the project to all Southeast Community College faculty at the monthly faculty meeting. She also introduced the project to the college's Publicity Committee and Director of Public Information, presented the project before the Institutional Advisory Board of Southeast Community College, and described the project before the Communications, Fine Arts, and Humanities division of Southeast Community College. In addition, at the bi-monthly facilitators meetings Joseph Marcum, in his capacity as facilitator for the Arts and Sciences faculty at the Bell County campus, kept the faculty and staff updated as to the activities and progress of the project. The president of Southeast Community College, Dr. W. Bruce Ayers, re-affirmed his support of the project and its goals many times, including providing funding needed to acquire library resources identified by team-members Joseph Marcum and Peggy Marcum. Those resources have been acquired, catalogued, and shelved in the library at the Bell County Campus of Southeast Community College and are therefore available to all fourteen community colleges within the University of Kentucky system via interlibrary loan.

Another successful activity was the Essay Competition among eighth grade students in the Bell County schools. In order to conduct the project the students in Joseph Marcum's Development of Leadership class (GE 140) first familiarized themselves with the project's basic goals by considering and discussing the set of

"Questions for Americans" developed for the NEH's project "A National Conversation On American Pluralism And Identity." They then organized and conducted a semester-long essay competition answering the question - What Does It Mean To Be An American? The competition culminated with a series of student-directed workshops for the ten essay winners and their families devoted to the project's themes and an Awards Ceremony/Banquet to recognize all the participants from the Bell County schools.

Issues and themes that the United States history survey courses and the Spanish classes share have been identified and partially integrated into those classes at the Bell County campus. The process of seeking *official* permission through the University of Kentucky Community College System's office to link HIS 108/109 and SPI 101/102 also has been initiated. In addition, the instructors for those classes are using videos acquired for the project to spark discussions of the project's themes. Especially effective discussion starters have been the videos "Talk To Me: Americans In Conversation," and "Surviving Columbus: The Story of the Pueblo People."

What remains to be done is first, infusion of the project's themes into classes at all three campuses of Southeast Community College. As revealed in the discussions during the site visit by our mentor and at the Professional Development Workshop conducted by Joseph Marcum and Peggy Marcum at the Bell County campus, faculty there are including readings, videos, and discussions related to the project questions into their classes. However, primarily because the campuses at

Cumberland and Whitesburg are respectively 60 and 90 miles distant from Bell County, communication and coordination, essential to the success of the project, have been difficult. Second, as indicated in the above paragraph, yet to be completed is official permission from the University of Kentucky Community College Systems Office to link the United States history survey classes (HIS 108/109) and the Spanish language classes (SPI 101/102). Work continues on this goal of our Action Plan, but it is expected that permission will be granted in the near future.

Students and faculty at Southeast Community College have identified the most divisive aspects of American society as race, religion, and social/economic class. What we have in common was identified as opportunity and the "freedom to do and be what we want to be." Other students and faculty members feel what brings us together as Americans are times of war and tragedies and the goodwill of such holidays as Thanksgiving and Christmas. When asked to suggest metaphors for America, students said that "America is a large, colorful Monet", "part vegetable soup - because the soup is very obvious as to what vegetable it is, but the broth is a blend of all the ingredients," or a "playground" because "so many different children come to the playground." Concern was also expressed about the lack of a shared civic culture, as well as a general sense of confusion about what we do have in common. One student related the story of the soldiers who made a dish called rock stew: "no one wanted to get involved with anyone else but got excited about what was happening and jumped in to help and couldn't wait to taste it."

TARRANT COUNTY JUNIOR COLLEGE DISTRICT
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Progress Report

Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground

The Tarrant County Junior College District opened in 1967 with its first campus, named simple and appropriately, South Campus, because of its location in South Forth Worth. The Northeast Campus, located in Northeast Tarrant County, close to the suburbs of Bedford and Euless, opened in 1968 followed by the Northwest Campus in Northwest Forth Worth in 1976. This fall our new Southeast Campus opened in Arlington, another Forth Worth suburb. All four of our campuses could best be described as urban and diverse with approximately 1000 credit courses and about the same number of non-credit ones. Our total student population averages about 26, 000 each semester, with about 76% classified as Caucasian, 10% Hispanic, 9,5% African-American, 4% Asian, and .6% Native American, percentages reflective of the Tarrant County population in general. Our faculty is about 30% non-Caucasian. The numbers of Asian-American and African-American students are steadily increasing.

The initial goal of our Action Plan is to develop an inclusive, non-traditional approach to the teaching of American literature, history, and culture. From this initial goal we have derived some supporting objectives, the most immediate of which was to add to the Fall 1996 schedule a multicultural team of History 2613: United States History to 1876, and English 1613, Composition I, along with sections of the initial pair on each of our campuses. Our next objective is to continue adding a variety of

sections of already existing courses across the core curriculum that would be committed to the multi-cultural theme. Our long-term goal is to create a unified learning community through which the faculty would work together to plan and deliver a cluster of classes committed to carrying out our initial goal.

The TCJC Common Ground Team, upon returning from the West Coast Regional Conference on American Pluralism and Identity in Los Angeles, California, committed itself to a series of steps that would successfully lead to the scheduling of Common Ground courses in the spring of 1997. First on the agenda was a decision to divulge our new commitment to administration, faculty, and students to prepare them for spring Common Ground courses. Therefore, the Team visited department chairs, division chairs, presidents, and chancellors on the four campuses, appraising them of the Common Ground project and of our plans to conduct faculty development meetings. The administrators' reaction was positive. A District newsletter, The Quest, developed by the TCJC's Teams serves as an instrument to keep faculty and administrators abreast of our progess.

At a luncheon sponsored by the campuses' presidents on April 22, Dr. Elizabeth Brown-Guillory conducted her first site visit to TCJC whereby she outlined the project to administrators, faculty members of various disciplines. Comments on this informative meeting were so positive that the Team scheduled another workshop and demonstration by Dr. Brown-Guillory. On October 24, the Team hosted a luncheon and teleconference "From me to We: Reviewing America's Civic Life in an Information Age" on the Northwest Campus, and once again the attendance by faculty, administrators, and students was very impressive.

In a concluding session on November 5, TCJC's Common Ground teaching

teams met on the Southeast Campus in a show-and-tell session. We shared our spring publicity materials, and ideas on content and sequence for our scheduled spring Common Ground courses. Members of each team shared sample brochures, letters and flyers addressed to our spring Freshman Composition I and History I Common Ground students.

We have been able to accomplish much. Our charter teaching team believes they now have a feel for what works and what doesn't work in regard to reading assignments, types and number of texts to use, utilization of class time for student work, essay prompts, lecture and discussion time. Our faculty has successfully moved the course from the realm of the merely theoretical, expressed in the proposal, to the world of the real classroom. The course will certainly undergo some revision in the future, especially now that we have added four more teams, but we now have a starting point for these revisions.

The faculty made a decision to relate historical events to contemporary life, and it has turned out well. This sort of emphasis was incorporated in both class discussion and essay assignments. For critique and revision purposes, instructors viewed student essay drafts on an LCD, with mixed results. Students wrote and turned in each class period comments relating to the essays read and possible discussion questions stemming from those comments. The pairing of a content-centered course (American History) with a skills course (Composition I) seems to be working well, for the ideas explored in the history component provide the students with substantial topics on which to write.

Classroom discussion centered on historical information gathered from textbook readings, lecture and documents and more contemporary viewpoints from our essay

reader. The instructors started the semester asking some basic questions and had the class write about their own cultural identities. These responses were shared with the rest of the class in order to demonstrate the multicultural make-up of the group. This was worthwhile to show that even in a small group there exists a wide range of cultures. As they examined each new culture, the class explored stereotypes generally held in society regarding that group. Although they had poor minority representation in the class, instructors attempted to elicit from those students their diverse perspectives concerning historical and contemporary issues. One student, in refusing to be considered "white," described himself as "Hispanic Hispanic," so that self-disclosure was used to further explore stereotypes and multiculutralism within cultures.

Our teachers say that they have had the usual problems with some of the students not doing the reading assignments and some class members monopolizing the conversation. Other than that, the most formidable obstacle they faced had to with the ethnic mix in the class. The class was overwhelmingly male and Anglo-American, with only one African-American student and three Hispanic ones.

Much remains to be done. We need to establish better communication between campuses, now that we have added other teams, and we now must honor our commitment to add other teamed and stand-alone courses to our Common Ground curriculum. We have a proposal from faculty members on one of our campuses to add a teamed American History and Fundamentals of Public Speaking combination. Students would study famous speeches from American History, such as those from the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, and use them as inspiration for speeches of their own. We also plan to add an American Literature and Philosophy team.

We have had several discussion about what it "means" to be an American. Generally speaking, students and faculty alike seem to believe that being an American has more to do with adherence to specific ideals and values than it has to do with cultural identity, although these ideals and values are reflected in what could be termed American culture. We have in common a sense of hope that things could be better, a belief in the possibility of progress on both the individual and community level. We tend to believe in the value of competition, the availability of opportunity, the inevitability of change. Indeed, American culture is always in a state of flux, reflecting our collective restlessness and our relentless search for a better life.

Sometimes we are divided by a false sense of tradition: a reluctance to give up old ways, old stereotypes, old modes of expression, but it is our belief that we are united in more ways than we are divided. And our teachers tell us that this ideal is the one that surfaces in their class discussions more than any other.

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PROGRESS REPORT

EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES:

IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

December, 1996

Tulsa Community College (TCC), an urban, multi-campus, comprehensive community college, was established in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1969. It is the largest junior college in Oklahoma, serving students on four campuses. With an average age of approximately thirty years of age, over 65% of Tulsa County first time freshmen begin their college educations at Tulsa Community College. The college has over 22,000 credit enrollments each semester, offering university-parallel associate degrees as well as certificate and associate-degree technical and occupational programs. Additionally, over 4,000 non-credit students are enrolled in a variety of courses each semester. The minority population of the college closely mirrors that of the metropolitan Tulsa area, with 8% of the student body identifying themselves as African-American, 5% as Native American, 2% as Hispanic, 3% as Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 1% as other.

The primary goals of TCC's "Exploring America's Communities" action plan are to promote professional development, to develop and enhance curricula, and to

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raise the general institutional awareness of the issues surrounding American plurality and identity. The team's first priority has been to involve faculty and staff in a number of activities designed to encourage the incorporation of concepts of American pluralism and identity into the curriculum. The faculty is aware of the paucity of its background in the study of non-European cultures, both within and without the borders of the United States.

To overcome this lacuna, faculty and staff have been meeting monthly since February 1996 in informal, yet structured, reading and discussion groups. There have been parallel groups, which have some overlap of members. The largest of the groups, approximately twenty faculty and staff from various disciplines and service areas and from all campuses, has been meeting to discuss and review specific articles and books and to exchange annotated bibliographies of recommended multicultural resources. The project team take responsibility for meeting arrangements and notification, but members of the group take turns in being responsible for the leadership of the group. Another, smaller group of faculty and staff met bi-monthly throughout the summer and fall semester to read and discuss Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, as a baseline, outsider's look at American culture in the 1830's. At the recommendation of visiting scholar, Dr. Sharon Harley (University of Maryland), the college has purchased multiple copies of Ronald Takaki's *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* for the group to read and discuss during the spring semester.

The goal of enhancing and enriching the curricula has been accomplished by those participating in the American Conversations study group. They compiled an annotated bibliography and recommended that the college purchase books and multimedia resources for research and classroom use. The group has also discussed Service Learning, with discussion being led by faculty who have integrated Service Learning into their existing courses. We are confident that, with time, the concept of Service Learning will be shared more widely.

The new course, American Humanities, is being expanded to a third campus. Resources recommended by the American Conversations group and the project team will be purchased to enhance this course. Additionally, because of the popularity of the course, the team is exploring the possibility of an American Studies option.

The third major goal is to raise the general institutional awareness of American pluralism and identity. Upon returning from Los Angeles, the team made a series of presentation to raise awareness and foster enthusiasm for the project. The first presentation was to the President of the college, followed by a presentation to TCC's Board of Regents and administration. The Board listened attentively and asked questions of all three team members. In April, the team invited the Student Activities Directors from each of the campuses and the student leaders of various student organizations to an information and brainstorming session. The following week, the team met with the fifteen division chairs of the college to inform them of the content and scope of the project and to invite their

participation in "Exploring America's Communities." Additionally, TCC's student newspaper published an article about the college's participation in the AACC project.

The visits by Dr. Sharon Harley in August and the AACC mentor, Dr. Bob Sessions (Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, IA), in November were two of the most effective catalysts for awareness. In each case, the team arranged for a variety of presentations/discussions with a number of college constituencies, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators. In addition, Dr. Sessions spoke to the Tulsa Community College Board of Regents, giving an overview of the nationwide project and, specifically, TCC's project. He recommended to the administration and the Board that they help those involved with the project continue to build on the strong foundation already established.

A unique awareness technique employed by the team was a facilitated discussion on core American values. A facilitator led a self-selected group of faculty and administrators through a two-hour session to discover what consensus, if any, could be reached on America's core values. The same exercise was repeated with provosts and deans from other northeast Oklahoma colleges which belong to the Higher Education Cultural Roundtable. Both groups concluded that Americans value personal freedom, yet long for a sense of community. The tension appears to be over how America can maintain personal freedom while fostering community. Both groups argued that education is the solution to the ignorance that breeds fear and separateness in Americans.

The discussions in classrooms and in various groups have been relaxed and productive. There has been no apparent hostility or reticence in discussing issues of race, class, or gender. The positive atmosphere established by the multiple awareness activities and the unqualified support of the college administration has been important to the success of the many conversations that have taken place. The only obstacle faced by the team was the time constraints of those who wished to participate but were unable to do so.

The team has decided not to have a capstone event to the project because to do so would give the false impression that TCC is finished "Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground." In fact, Tulsa Community College has just begun to address the issues of American pluralism and identity. The team expects that activities will persist and increase. The reading and discussion groups will continue to meet and students have indicated an interest in duplicating the project. The Higher Education Cultural Roundtable has taken "Democracy in America" as its program theme for the academic year and will sponsor two lectures and discussions, led by Clay Jenkinson (University of Nevada at Reno), based on Tocqueville's work with notes for the nineties. These programs will be open to students, faculty, staff, and the general public. Furthermore, the college recently received a grant from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development which will provide funding to establish Community Outreach Partnership Centers in low-income communities. Service learning is an integral part of the vision for these Centers.

The visibility and activities of these three projects will enhance the growing awareness of American pluralism and identity, and the institutional responsibility for that awareness. Additionally, the influence of "Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground" will continue to diffuse throughout the curriculum and culture of Tulsa Community College.

TYLER JUNIOR COLLEGE

EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES: IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

TYLER JUNIOR COLLEGE PROGRESS REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

Tyler Junior College was established in 1926 and has a strong transfer program, as well as a workforce training component through technical/vocational and continuing education. We have an enrollment of approximately 8500 full/part-time students each semester and 15,000 non-credit students per year. Located between Dallas and Shreveport, Tyler is an urban community of 75,000 people. The community is comprised of a diverse population, with 20% African American, 65% Anglo, and 15% Hispanic. Unfortunately, economic and social division continue to characterize the residential patterns of the city. Enrollment patterns at the College mirror that of the community, with the exception of a small but increasing Hispanic population. The College attracts enrollment from surrounding rural communities, as well as from several cities in Texas. It is the fifth largest community college in the state and known for quality and beauty. Tyler Junior College is unique because of a traditional campus life, its pivotal role in economic development, and sponsorship of the arts.

II. ACTION PLAN GOALS

A. Solicit administrative endorsement and support of project
B. Infuse existing curriculum with at least one pluralism concept among specified courses
C. Provide opportunities for faculty dialogue pertaining to cultural diversity
D. Establish multicultural awareness throughout the campus and community
E. Initiate student pluralism projects

III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A. Presentations were made to the college president, Dr. Bill Crowe, to the Instructional Counsel, and to the Faculty Senate. All gave strong endorsements to the project.

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B. We implemented a new course, "The American Experiment" that brings together American History and English composition to organize and analyze historical data and examine the broad cultural development of the US through writing and discussion. Community leaders served as resource persons for this class. In addition to this specified course, faculty members across the disciplines pledged additional pluralism components in their respective courses.

C. SPECIAL OCCASIONS

(1) Instructional Deans provided a Great Teaching/Great Learning luncheon for all faculty to explore the issues of determining the American identity through presentations and roundtable discussions.

(2) The pluralism committee developed and distributed an annotated bibliography on Pluralism issues to be infused across the curriculum. From this bibliography, the President's Reading Group chose to study *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *In the Lake of the Woods*, and *The End of Education*.

(3) Pluralism/Identity Committee and Instructional Deans initiated in-service training to explore cultural differences. A particularly effective effort related to Sivasaliasm Thiagarajan's flexible simulation game, BARANGA. This simulation provides a model in which players analyze their differences with new insight and perspective.

IV. CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS PROJECTS

A. A campus-wide faculty committee planned and implemented a speakers' series open to the community with the theme, "Ethical Issues in Pluralistic America." Speakers included the award-winning performer Gregory Alan-Williams, Bertrice Berry, Ph.D. from Kent State, Robert M. Steele, Ph.D. from Poynter Institute for Media Studies, and Charles Pellegrino, Ph.D., the "Father of Jurassic Park."

B. Government classes sponsored International Week, "That We May All Be One." Two thousand people attended this festive event which included displays of flags, representations of products and people from around the world, cultural arts, and samples of international cuisine. Attendees included regional college and public school students, as well as community participants. This activity was open to the public with no admission charge.

C. The student newspaper featured a series pertaining to race relations on campus, including student interviews.

D. Community outreach included Tyler Junior College and Big Brothers/Big Sisters co-sponsoring a multicultural diversity dinner with 500 community attendees. The Honorable Ronald Kirk, Mayor of Dallas, was the featured speaker.

E. Tyler Junior College and the Tyler Museum of Art co-sponsored the exhibit, "The North American Indian." This exhibit featured Edward S. Curtis' original portfolio of photogravures and 20 volumes of text. This unparalleled collection of Native American life was donated to Tyler Junior College by Dr. and Mrs. Tom Smith.

F. Tyler Junior College and the Hispanic Association of East Texas co-sponsored the Mexico-based Folklorica Ballet. Over 700 attendees from throughout the community enjoyed this colorful event on campus.

G. Tyler Junior College's Modern Language Program coordinated the community's elementary schools' bilingual education presentation of *La Posada* on our campus.

V. STUDENT PROJECTS

A. A student-generated art exhibit explored the question of "What It Means To Be An American" and invited viewers to interact by writing publicly-displayed responses to the works.

B. The Student Senate provided decorations and hospitality for the luncheon introducing our Mentor, Dr. Carmen Salazar, to the campus and provided student guides for her campus tour.

C. The Tyler Junior College Gospel Choir provided the entertainment for this luncheon.

D. The Pluralism Committee included student representation.

VI. CONVERSATION

Members of the Pluralism Committee have begun the "conversation" within the classroom on issues of cultural diversity by using current events appropriate to the course work to stimulate student discussion and to increase awareness. Examples of extended discussions and written responses include the issues raised by the O. J. Simpson trials, the Rodney King trial, immigration issues, and affirmative action policies.

VII. OBSTACLES AND WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

The mind-set on our campus and in our community creates reluctance to change the traditional curriculum. While we are increasing awareness and promoting dialogue across campus, we see the need of developing a systematic approach to curriculum revision and faculty development relating to effective pedagogy addressing diversity. We also have a need for development addressing conflict resolution and techniques in bringing to the open "simmering problems" relating to racism, sexism, etc. This community strongly reflects the ethnocentrism that characterizes the East Texas culture.

VIII. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

A. What Does It Mean To Be An American?

Responses From Colleagues:

"Commitment to freedom, individualism, creativity, rights/responsibilities, privileges"

"A patchwork quilt made up of diverse pieces"

"A melting pot"

"A productive tax paying contributor to society"

"A diverse community that somehow manages to function"

"A cake recipe with all ingredients needed to make a good cake"

B. What Divides Us As Americans?

"Culture, Religions, Race, Religion, Gender, Competitiveness, Individualism, Greed"

C. What Brings Us Together

"Tragedy, Shared History, Patriotism, Education, Common Language"

D. What Do We Have In Common?

"An idealism that gives us hope for the future"

"A humanitarian spirit"

"Creativity"

IX. CONCLUSION

"We have come a long way but have a long ways to go." This quote from a staff member is only part of our story, as is this outline response for our report. We feel compelled to report "our story" in this conclusion, to tell more than the documented formality required:

At Tyler Junior College, the people who have worked closely with the "In Quest of Common Ground" objectives this past year have felt that we had a jump start on the project. Instead of beginning with an administratively-initiated group of the usual three people who were to act as coordinators and liaisons for the grant's fulfillment in connection with the National Endowment for the Humanities efforts, we began with a much larger core committee made up of faculty from several Humanities academic departments and two deans who all responded to the opportunity offered via the "Common Ground" teleconference simply because we clearly saw the need for help on our campus and in our community. The committee meetings themselves, then, spontaneously became mini-seminars--dialogues concerning problems spinning off cultural diversity in our families, community and College. During these meetings, we shared announcements of service organizations, program opportunities, and special needs among people in our community. We also shared personal "eye witness" stories of little cultural victories and examples of prejudicial treatment. Informal and octopus-like from its beginning, the committee grew to include a person from the library, from media-services, students, and the occasional drop-ins. The committee seemed to become, in fact, Common Ground. The dialogue that developed was greatly aided and abetted because every faculty and staff member on our campus is networked

via computer. Many of us developed a "Common Ground" file in our e-mail program for collecting all sorts of ideas and data. Actually, then, our beginning for this project was probably similar to the end result on many southern-oriented campuses.

And the waves continue to vibrate outwards. The latest important initiative toward the search for common ground has come from our Director of Student Activities, Scott Nalley, and the Student Senate, which, in turn, set a fire under some students in the new team class for history/English; "The American Experiment." The idea is that next spring we should create a real quilt-of-many-colors called "The TJC Family" with pieces contributed by the various TJC organizations, classes, or anyone so-inclined, have quilting parties to finish it by culturally diverse quilters from our community, and hang it with ceremony in a place of honor in the student center. From that idea, then, came another student-generated notion of the team class sponsoring an exhibit in connection with the quilt-hanging that would be a study of their very American but diverse origins. One student, for example, openly, for the first time, discussed in her history class her ancestors who were slaves on a plantation. Other students shared her anguish and her pride. For the hoped-for exhibit, she has offered the possibility of sharing a quilt made by her enslaved great-great grandmother together with copies of early photographs of ancestors.

One small step, perhaps. But we are deeply grateful for this bit of evidence that we have, indeed, come a long way, even if we do have a long way to go.

VALENCIA
A BETTER PLACE TO START

Progress Report

AACC/NEH Common Ground Project

Team: **Daniel Dutkofski, Philip E. Bishop, Kevin Mulholland**

Mentor: **Daniel E. Rivas, Saddleback College**

Something about Valencia

Founded in 1967, Valencia Community College has served Orange and Osceola counties in Central Florida, providing programs leading to the AA degree, as well as over 40 different AS degrees. It is the fourth largest community college in Florida and over the past decade has been the fastest growing of Florida's five largest community colleges. To keep up with the growing demands of the area, 4 different campuses have been established and two centers maintained. Last year, the college had an actual enrollment of 47, 212: 36, 846 students for credit courses and 10,726 for Continuing Professional Education. The enrollment of the college is somewhat reflective of the demographics of the area, but certainly the area of greatest growth is in the area of minority students. At present, 67.8% of the college students identify themselves as Caucasian, 11.1% African-America, 13.6% Hispanic, and 5.2% Asian. This diversity brings a richness to campus life, a variety to the classroom situation, but also challenges the college to recognize and address this diversity.

Our Action Plan: Creating Conversations about Diversity

The central aim of our action plan was to develop activity packets or modules. The modules focused on a theme (duty/freedom, equality/hierarchy, etc.) and provided a structured sequence of learning activities

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an equal opportunity institution

Valencia Community College

organized around the theme:

1. *Concrete activity or stimulus:* A reading, video, debate, simulation, or other experience that will challenge and stimulate students to thought.

2. *Personal observation or reflection:* An opportunity for individual analysis, response, reflection.

3. *Collaborative activity:* Small-group discussion or other student-centered collaborative activity.

4. *Synthesis and application:* Opportunities for further research or application of learning (an essay, research project, or community involvement)

5. *Assessment:* Evaluation of topic activities, including the Common Ground questionnaire (to be submitted to project team).

The project's intent was to provide the pedagogical groundwork for the NEH Summer Institutes on non-Western civilizations that we expected to commence in summer 1997. The new content knowledge that faculty acquired in the summer institutes could be implemented in activities that helped students experience the diversity of cultures and opinions. After the March meeting and the draft action plan, the team decided to organize a college-wide, public event that would highlight the Common Ground agenda. These events were to be forums on a diversity-related issue, featuring panels of experts interacting with student/faculty audiences.

Obstacles and Outcomes

The delay of the first summer institute to 1998 meant that the diversity modules needed to stand alone, as promoting understanding and providing experience in diversity issues across the curriculum. In working with faculty to implement these modules, the Common Ground team found it difficult to import our thematic topics into courses of various content. It was necessary, rather, to develop a theme out of the course proper (for example, "Democracy and Individual Rights" for a government course, "Religious

Tolerance and Intolerance" for a medieval humanities course). We also found that implementing a structured, small-group discussion required fairly intensive mentoring; even veteran faculty did not always have experience in facilitating collaborative activities. The bonus in these impediments was that faculty discovered the power of such activities and are likely to employ these techniques more broadly and more often. One colleague testified that he was re-structuring his entire government course to provide more opportunity for student discussion and exchange. Because the work went much slower than we expected, the Common Ground team worked with fewer faculty in the fall semester than we had hoped. On the other hand, the enthusiasm of our colleagues and the rather stupendous successes of the implemented modules promise great things for the spring semester. One possible course for broader effect is to ask each humanities instructor to implement a diversity module once during the spring semester. We look also to encourage faculty in social science courses.

The diversity forums (organized around the hot election-year topic of affirmative action) were a rousing success, too. The expert panels included Valencia faculty and officials and representatives of area liberal-arts colleges and major corporations. Students responded vocally and passionately, in some cases carrying the discussion back to their classrooms. A spring forum is being planned on the topic of "the future of feminism," as part of Valencia's month-long celebration of women.

The Next Stage

The future of the Common Ground project here at Valencia is linked to two considerations. On the one hand, it is critical that the work that has already been done remain the focus of future projects. Too many important initiatives have floundered or, more significantly, have died a quiet, lonely death of inactivity because of fragmentation and overextension. People have lost sight of the original intention and have modified plans until they no longer had any resemblance to the original. To prevent this, we must stay

committed to the original objectives: establish a meaningful and productive forum for discussion of diversity and introduce information from different cultural perspectives. On the other hand, the project must continue to grow and adapt to the changing circumstances and conditions which the college addresses in its mission. The delay in the first scheduled summer institute simply means that a different forum for expanding the initiative across the campuses must be found. Although the process of mentoring faculty members has proven to be quite time-intensive, it still is vital to the success of the initiative and needs to be maintained.

The Tenor of Our Conversations

To date, the response to the action plan as it has unfolded has been quite positive. The students' response (which is, after all, the most important) has been marked by an enthusiastic recognition of the plan's basic assumption: if we establish an appropriate forum in which ideas can be shared openly and honestly, they will be. Students who have contributed to class discussions in the past continue to do so, but students who have been more quiet find themselves drawn into the dialogue. They do so because they feel the safety the questions provide to students holding diverse opinions. They also enter the discussion more readily because what is sought is their own ideas and opinions; there is no wrong answer, only their experience. This validation of their contribution helps them accept more responsibility for the class and relate the material to more than just a final grade and credit on a transcript.

The faculty response has also been interesting. Obviously, faculty members were recruited because they are known to be good instructors who have a history of innovation in the classroom. Their past success notwithstanding, they found that the modules enabled them to take their classes to the next level. The depth of the discussion improved and rather than becoming one more thing to do in the classroom, the modules in fact enhanced what the faculty members were already trying to do. By

encouraging more open dialogue on diverse issues in particular lessons, the faculty found the students better prepared for the "ordinary" material. Students tended to be more interdisciplinary in the classes because they knew that the connection they saw were important and had a place in the course.

Overall, the module activities and the forums have instigated a number of civil and reasoned conversations about the meaning of American experience and the role that diversity plays in it. It is just such conversations that the academy is supposed to promote. As our first summer institute approaches, we expect that such conversations on diversity will already be a part of the humanities curriculum. Most important, we feel, is that diversity be an active learning experience that engages students in passionate debate, not yet another dry and distant topic of only academic interest.

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EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES : IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND
PROGRESS REPORT--WEST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE

West Los Angeles College, one of the 9 Los Angeles Community Colleges, was founded in 1969 in the aftermath of the Watts Riots. Located between the Baldwin Hills and the Pacific Ocean, WLAC was constructed on land once part of the MGM backlot in Culver City, California. Its 7,800 students are 52% African American, 10% Asian, 16% Hispanic, 16% white and 6% "other". The campus stands 1 mile south of SONY/Columbia studios, 1 mile north of the site of the Speilberg Dreamworks and 5 miles north of LAX.

2. The PRIMARY GOALS of our action plan were to expand and deepen our interdisciplinary studies program--Partners.

EXPANSION involves offering more sections of the current program at the college, creating new programs at the college, and extending the program to our local high schools as a high school-college "bridge".

DEEPENING the program involves developing the curriculum to include greater emphasis upon Asian, Native American and immigrant groups, updating material on African Americans and Latinos and re-configuring materials to emphasize BOTH the diversity and commonality of the American experience.

3. Our ACCOMPLISHMENTS include the following:

A. Our English texts have been discarded and replaced by personally selected Primis readings from McGraw Hill which combine traditional and multi-cultural readings and which will be introduced in our classes this Spring

B. Lectures and films have been altered. Among the alterations:

1. Use of the film "Last of the Mohicans", portions of the original novel and a lecture on the Eastern Native American population in order to compare and contrast various approaches to the Native American
2. Use of the film "Gone with the Wind", excerpts from Uncle Tom's Cabin and contemporary accounts of the Civil War and Reconstruction to analyze the historiographies of the period
3. Use of two films by the same director--El Norte and Mi Familia--to create a discussion atmosphere for consideration of the positive and negative effects of immigration.

C. We have assigned a major paper on the impact of immigration upon the immigrant and the American. (The papers are due next week.)

D. Our college catalogs, schedules and special "Partners" brochure have been reconfigured to increase the visibility of multi-culturalism on the campus. Our brochure has been revised to stress the transferability of all classes in the program and our NEH/AACC support which adds a "touch of class" to this undertaking.

E. We have begun the process of expanding the program to one of our local high schools and developed materials to encourage enrollment.
In general, it can be said that our attempts to deepen the program have been successful. Our attempts to expand the program have met with less success.

4. Major OBSTACLES have thwarted our progress.

A. Our attempts to expand the program on campus have been threatened by new technology. A series of technological "glitches" with the enrollment process combined with the institution of telephone registration decimated the program this Fall. Students were not co-enrolled in all sections and we were forced to cancel two of the three Partners program for the first time. We have taken a number of steps to solve this problem. But the proof of the pudding will be in the Spring enrollment which we shall see when classes begin on January 13th. (That's why most of our team will not be joining you in New Orleans) Wish us well.

B. Expansion into the high Schools was met with some resistance and some support. (Kate O' Conner who will represent us in New Orleans will report on that development.) Of the 7 high schools we contacted, 4 have shown no interest, 2 have expressed interest but taken no action and one program is likely for the Spring.

5. What REMAINS TO BE DONE. Less than remained last year, but lots to do.

A. While we have revised our mission statement and placed the new one in a variety of documents, we still have not posted it campus-wide.

B. We need to extend our conversation to the entire faculty. This will be even more difficult next year since the only mandatory faculty meeting of the year has been canceled. We will try "constituency" meetings and written communication.

C. We will continue to communicate with our local high schools in hope of expanding the program

D. We will begin discussion with Administration about budget augmentations for hiring adjunct faculty teams for campus expansion to other areas of the curriculum (i.e. Sociology and Health, Law and Administration of Justice) to deal with issues affecting our diverse Los Angeles population.

6. What RESPONSES have we had to our activities

We have just begun to address these items. We have focused on students first and the curriculum second. We have not really dealt with the larger community.

Our students have been asked to identify five items which we have in common and five items which divide us. They are:

A. In common: belief in fairness, tolerance, justice, success, truth

B. Dividing us: race, class, success, trust, status

We will work on further defining these areas and developing responses to them next semester. In Los Angeles, this discussion has been severely impacted by Rodney King,Reginald Denny, O.J. Simpson, Prop 187 and Prop 209. The dialogue on these issues has shriveled as a result. One can consider this good or bad. WE have to turn a "raison" back into a plum before we can move forward.

Finally, we would love to "revisit L.A." and its multitude of ethnic, racial and religious facilities from the African-American Museum to the Japanese American National Museum to the Museum of Tolerance to the Southwest Museum among many others if only we had the money for school buses for our students (many of whom use public transportation) but no one really thinks about "busing" adults.

On behalf of out team: Bruce Andeis, Leige Henderson, Kate O'Conner, Lloyd Thomas and myself, Virginia Mulrooney and with gratitude to Bob Franco and AACC and NEH best wishes for the coming year.